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EDITORIAL

Do We Believe in a Personal God?

“ Must we speak of ‘ God ’ or of ‘ the Divine ’ ? That is the real problem, the one of personality rather than of existence. Believers are those who affirm the divine personality ; atheists are those who deny it. Shall we be atheists or believers ? ”

Professor LE ROY. *Le Problème de Dieu.*

The decisive question with which humanity is faced is not whether God exists but whether He is personal. It is a sign of the weakness of present-day Christianity that this is so little recognised.

There are scores of Christians who believe that the great spiritual battle is to be fought between “ religionists ”, who believe in some kind of divine reality and the “ secularists ” who reject everything divine. They advocate a concentration of all forces which view the universe as in some sense spiritual in order to combat the purely materialistic or mechanistic conceptions of life.

It is however not difficult to understand that this warfare resembles the Quixotic attack on the wind-mills. For the

line which is thus drawn is purely artificial. The battle becomes one of mere words, a logomachy. To have a spiritual view of the universe, "to believe in God" means nothing by itself. It all depends what one means by these terms. If we put on one side all those who have dropped the word "God" from their terminology and on the other side those who continue to use it, we have two companies of people who agree in nothing except the use of a word.

What then is the real dividing line? It is the one which we have tried to formulate in the title of this number of *The Student World*. To the question: "Do we believe in God?" we can only answer by another question: "What God?" To the question: "Do we believe in a personal God?" we must say: yes or no. In the first case we can escape by a *reservatio mentis*, in the second case we commit ourselves.

"Do we believe in a personal God?" The question is by no means a theoretical one. I cannot believe in a personal God unless He exists for me as a real person, that is as a "thou". I cannot decide the question by speculation because even if all evidence of the world forced me to think of God as personal, while I have not actually met Him as a personal Will in my life, the question remains unanswered. To believe in a personal God means that we have come face to face with one, who speaks and acts in our lives.

From the view point of the spectator it is an impossible question to ask. From the view point of the participant it is the only relevant question about life. The spectator, whether philosopher, artist or scientist must as such take an impersonal principle as his guide. Reason, beauty, natural law — these categories suffice as long as one remains purely "disinterested". It is only for man, as one who has to live and to live for something, that the question arises: "Is there a 'thou' to live for? Am I as man alone in the universe? Is everything allowed? Or is there One who claims my allegiance, my love, my worship?"

In our days it is becoming abundantly clear that the half-way house between belief in a personal God and pure cynicism and despair is an inhabitable place. Although there are

still many who believe that they can base their lives on the belief in an impersonal God, coextensive and identical with humanity or nature, the more perspicacious critics of our time see the half-heartedness of these attempts.

"The modern temper" in its deeper currents is better characterized by Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch than by the humanists. And what is Krutch's view? "Nature, in her blind thirst for life, has filled every possible cranny of the rotting earth with some sort of fantastic creature, and among them man is but one — perhaps the most miserable of all, because he is the only one in whom the instinct of life falters long enough to enable it to ask the question "Why?" Or again: "Ours is a lost cause and there is no place for men in the universe, but we are not, for all that, sorry to be human. We would rather die as men than live as animals." It is the old cry of Pascal: "The silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me." No speculation can get away from the fact that nature does not answer our most searching questions.

Where then shall we look for the answer? From whom else should it come but from God Himself? Pascal the scientist is answered by Pascal the Christian. "God speaks well about God." Has God spoken? He has in Jesus Christ. In Him God comes to us as the personal God, Who claims our lives, Who offers Himself as the one goal of life, giving meaning to our small existences. Do we believe in a personal God? We do because we have heard the word that He has spoken to us in His son. A God, Who loves us like that, cannot be less than personal.

V. 't H.

Uebersetzung

“ Sollen wir von “ Gott ” oder von dem “ Göttlichen ” reden ? Da liegt das wirkliche Problem, Persönlichkeit im Gegensatz zu Sein. Diejenigen, die die göttliche Persönlichkeit bejahen, sind Gläubige, diejenigen, die sie verneinen, sind Atheisten. Wollen wir Atheisten oder Gläubige sein ? ”

Professor LE ROY. *Le Problème de Dieu.*

Die entscheidende Frage, vor die die Menschheit gestellt ist, ist nicht, ob es einen Gott gibt, sondern ob dieser Gott ein persönlicher Gott ist. Dass dies so wenig klar erkannt wird, ist ein Zeichen der Schwäche des Christentums von heute.

Es gibt sehr viele Christen, die glauben, dass die grosse geistige Schlacht zwischen den “ religiösen ” Menschen, die an eine Art göttlicher Wirklichkeit glauben, und den “ weltlich gesinnten ”, die alles Göttliche verneinen, geschlagen werden muss. Sie streben die Konzentration aller Kräfte an, die irgendwie im Universum das Geistige sehen, um so die rein materialistische und mechanisierte Auffassung des Lebens zu bekämpfen.

Man wird aber sofort erkennen, dass diese Kampfweise sehr dem Angriff Don Quixotes auf die Windmühlen gleicht, denn die Linie, die hier gezogen wird, ist absolut künstlich. Die Schlacht wird zum Wortgefecht, zur Wortklauberei. Wenn man aber eine geistige Auffassung des Universums, “ Glaube an Gott ” hat, so heisst dies, dass nichts aus sich selber besteht. Alles hängt davon ab, was man mit diesen Worten meint. Wenn wir auf die eine Seite alle die stellen, die das Wort “ Gott ” aus ihrem Wortschatz gestrichen haben, und auf die andere die, die es noch gebrauchen, dann haben wir zwei verschiedene Gruppen, die in nichts etwas Gemeinsames haben als nur in der Anwendung eines Wortes.

Wo liegt dann aber die wirkliche Grenze ? Wir haben sie in dem Titel der vorliegenden Nummer der “ Student World ” zu formulieren versucht. Auf die Frage : “ Glauben wir an Gott ? ” können wir nur mit einer anderen Frage antworten : “ Was für einen Gott ? ”. Auf die Frage : “ Glauben wir an einen persönlichen Gott ? ” müssen wir “ ja ” oder “ nein ” sagen. Im ersten Fall können wir uns durch

ein *reservatio mentis* flüchten, im zweiten nehmen wir eine Verpflichtung auf uns.

“Glauben wir an einen persönlichen Gott?” Die Frage ist keineswegs eine theoretische. Ich kann nicht an einen persönlichen Gott glauben, wenn er nicht für mich als wirkliche Persönlichkeit besteht, d.h. als ein “Du”. Ich kann die Frage nicht durch Theorien lösen, denn wenn sogar alle Wahrnehmungen der Welt mich zwingen würden, an Gott als einen persönlichen Gott zu denken, so bleibt die Frage doch unbeantwortet, bis er mir in meinem eigenen Leben als persönlicher Wille begegnet ist. Glaube an einen persönlichen Gott heisst, dass wir jemandem gegenüber gestanden haben, der in unserem Leben spricht und handelt.

Es ist unmöglich, dem Zuschauenden die Frage zu stellen. Dem Beteiligten ist sie die einzige Frage seines Lebens, die Bedeutung hat. Der Zuschauende, mag er nun Philosoph, Künstler oder Gelehrter sein, muss als solcher immer ein unpersönliches Prinzip als Richtlinie nehmen. Vernunft, Schönheit, Naturgesetz, das alles genügt, solange man absolut “unbeteiligt” bleibt. Nur dem Menschen, der zu leben hat, für etwas leben muss, erwacht die Frage: “gibt es ein “Du”, für das man leben kann? Bin ich, der Mensch, allein im Universum? Ist alles erlaubt? Oder gibt es ein Wesen, das meinen Gehorsam, meine Liebe, meine Verehrung verlangt?”

In unseren Tagen wird es unbarmherzig klar, dass das Zwischending zwischen Glaube an einen persönlichen Gott und absolutem Zynismus und der Verzweiflung eine unwirtliche Sphäre ist. Obgleich es noch viele gibt, die glauben, dass sie ihr Leben aufbauen können durch den Glauben an einen unpersönlichen Gott, der identisch und gleichbedeutend mit Menschheit oder Natur ist, so sehen doch scharfblickende Kritiker die Halbheit dieses Versuchs.

“Das moderne Temperament” in seinen tieferen Wesenszügen ist besser durch Herrn Joseph Wood Krutch charakterisiert worden als durch die Humanisten. Und was ist Krutchs Ansicht? “Die Natur hat in ihrem blinden Durst nach Leben jeden kleinsten Winkel dieser elenden Erde mit irgendeiner Art phantastischem Lebewesen gefüllt, und unter diesen ist der Mensch nur eins von vielen — vielleicht das elendeste von allen, denn er ist das einzige, in dem der Lebensinstinkt lange genug zittert, um die Frage zu stellen “Warum?”.” Oder weiter. “Wir sind verlorene Geschöpfe, denn im Universum gibt es keinen Platz für den Menschen, und trotzdem sind wir nicht traurig, dass wir Menschen sind. Wir würden lieber als Menschen sterben, als als Tiere leben”. Es ist der alte Schrei Pascals: “Das Schweigen dieser unendlichen Räume beängstigt

mich ". Keine Theorie kann uns die Tatsache wegleugnen, dass die Natur auf unsere tiefsten Fragen keine Antwort hat.

Wo sollen wir dann die Antwort finden ? Wer anders als Gott kann sie uns geben ? Pascal der Gelehrte findet die Antwort durch Pascal den Christen. " Gott spricht gut von Gott ". Hat Gott gesprochen ? Ja, in Jesus Christus. In Ihm kommt Er zu uns als der persönliche Gott, der unser Leben von uns fordert, der sich selber darbietet als das einzige Lebensziel, welches unserem armen Dasein einen Sinn gibt. Glauben wir an einen persönlichen Gott ? Ja, denn wir haben das Wort vernommen, das Er durch Seinen Sohn zu uns geredet hat. Ein Gott, der uns so liebt, kann nichts geringeres sein als persönlich.

V. 't H.

The New Humanism and Where it is Inadequate.

David S. CAIRNS

From all parts of the world today there come reports of the spread of naturalism and with it the secular spirit. In the Farther East this is due to the gradual destruction of the older faiths by the incoming of the new scientific cosmology which seems to be received in its impersonal and mechanistic form. In Russia and the lands influenced by the Bolshevik propaganda the version of naturalism which is received is that of Karl Marx with its economic materialistic view of history. In the English speaking lands in particular the new version which is at present most popular is that of Humanism, which we may define as we find it in most of its exponents as the endeavour to conserve what is best in modern life on the assumption that there is nothing beyond " Nature ". This term is often left undefined but it is understood to mean human life and the world in which it is set without God and without immortality.

The same conception underlies all these varying forms. It is that the ultimate truth for us men and women is given us by physical science. That account is taken as complete or at least as the fundamental interpretation to which all other accounts must be subordinated.

Its widespread prevalence is not due to any increase in the force of the evidence, or to the appearance of any great materialistic thinker, it is mainly due to the popularisation of science and the acceptance of science as giving a complete and final account of the Universe, i.e. as in itself a philosophy and a religion.

Of late in the English speaking lands at least there has been a very significant change coming over the confident and sanguine naturalism of the Victorian period. As men and women have familiarised themselves with the naturalistic view and have drawn its consequences, in the ethical aesthetic and religious domain they have become alarmed and repelled, a stage which has not yet been reached by the secularism of Russia and the Farther East. The world has become extraordinarily bleak and unsatisfying. There seems to be no real basis for great art, or for noble living, and no secure foundation for an enduring and worthy national life, or even for civilisation itself. This is the note that runs through Lippmann's "Preface to Morals" which has had a large circulation in America and Krutch's "The Modern Temper". Mr. Lippmann sets himself to face this situation, and on a naturalistic basis to sketch a programme of thought and action to meet the emergency, but I cannot but think that the solution he offers one is extraordinarily thin and academic, and very much inferior in force to the impressive passages in which he depicts the decay of the older faiths. His book leaves me asking "what are the premises which have led to these conclusions?" And when one has raised this question it is just here that one finds the new Humanism weak. It is an endeavour to conserve the best and finest human values on a naturalistic basis, and the plain truth is that it cannot be done.

These values demand for their intellectual basis a certain interpretation of human nature as free and spiritual for which

there is no room in a naturalistic theory of the Universe. In other words they demand a view of human values which to me at least in the long run implies a Theistic view of the world.

This seems to me the Achilles heel of all the books of the Humanists that I have read.

Mr. Lippmann, for instance, simply takes for granted that the Christian view of man is the product of man's hopes and fears and desires. It is the emotional projection of these on the heavens. By far the most impressive passage in his book is his comparison of the old Christian view of things to a dramatic spectacle in which we are deluded by the fiction of reality till at last the moment comes when we have to rise and go out into the light of day and the prose of life, as science reveals it. The whole Christian epic is an emotional fiction. This is simply taken for granted. We ask them what is the reality, when the imaginative and emotional veil is taken away. The answer is "Nature". What then is Nature?

Nature, as we know, is an ambiguous word, but Nature as it is expounded by naturalism, is the world as we apprehend it through the senses — scientific understanding. It is made up of things and persons. To Naturalism persons are fundamentally collocations of things. Whether these things are dead atoms or rhythms of energy does not matter for the argument. To all true Naturalism things are fundamental, permanent personalities are secondary and transient. Now this interpretation of the Universe is in fundamental conflict with a deep conviction in mankind that there is a profound difference in kind between persons and things. The new humanism has got to answer the question whether this deep conviction is part of the same illusion as it believes Christianity to be. If it is not, then and then only are we really in a position to begin our inquiry as to whether Christianity is an illusion. If it is, then let us trace some of the consequences. There are two convictions to which any speaker in any civilised progressive state to any audience today could make appeal with the certainty that he would find immediate response. The first is that it is the duty

of every Government to exploit the world of things, to the utmost for the advantage of human beings — mines, agriculture, transport, commerce, etc. — all are forms of such exploitation. The only limit to the exploitation of non-personal living creatures is that it must be done with humanity. But done it must be all the same.

The other conviction held today by all progressive states is that the exploitation of human beings in this fashion is not simply imprudent, not simply that it must be done with humanity but that it is shameful and morally *wrong*.

Now is this conviction an illusion? Is it part of that moving but fading drama of the older faith, from which we must go out into the solid world of prosaic reality? But if it is a true conviction, then there must be a deep distinction in kind and not simply in amount or organisation between persons and things.

It is one of the paradoxes of Bolshevism today that this theoretically materialistic and atheist civilisation should hold with such passion the infamy of human exploitation. All other types of moral duty may go into the melting-pot, but this cardinal principle must be preserved, this holy of holies must not be desecrated, the capitalist must no longer exploit his fellow man! But why, one may ask, should he not exploit him, unless there is in him something other than the material elements? Now I submit we have here something much deeper and more enduring than the play of desire and emotion, we have the recognition of a reality, a reality of which every morally sane and intellectually thorough-going mind ought to take account.

It is because all this materialistically coloured thinking of our time does not take account of it that people influenced by it in the English speaking lands are tending to find life silly and meaningless. For the awakened human mind demands not only causes, but ends, it asks not only "How?" but "Why?", and the one question is every whit as legitimate as the other. But the "Why?" can only be answered fully when we admit an intrinsic and objective worth in the world without us, and this objective worth simply cannot exist in a world that in the last resort consists only of things or

collocations of things. There is much more to be said on this point than there is room for here, and so I shall content myself with a quotation from one of our younger writers of real insight. In Mr. Tomlinson's novel *Gallions Reach* he tells how his hero, having lost through a moral shock all sense of living in a reasonable world, begins to recover his rationality through further apparent disaster, in which he experiences what comradeship means.

"His knowledge of Sinclair and that bunch of men of his old ship, gave to an aimless and sprawling world that assurance of anonymous courage and faith waiting in the sordid muddle for a signal, ready when it came. You could never tell where they were. They were only the crowd. There was nothing to distinguish them. They had no names. They were nobodies. But when they were wanted, there they were ; and when they had finished their task they disappeared, leaving no sign save in the heart. Without the certainty of that artless and profitless fidelity of simple souls, the great ocean would be as silly as the welter of doom undesigned, and the living importance of the august affairs of the flourishing cities worth no more homage than the brickbats of Babylon. Those people gave to God any countenance by which He would be known." But if all this is true, it has deep significance for our interpretation of the Cosmos, which contains both things and persons. After all, we have to try to make sense and unity of it. We cannot leave the matter in a hopeless dualism. All the great philosophies are an attempt to solve it. I have not space left to discuss the alternative solutions. Naturalism, I hold, is in all its forms an attempt to evade the real problem by levelling down persons to things. The moment you feel that whatever else will do, this certainly will *not* do, then you must face this problem of making sense of the world.

The only solution that is to me really satisfying is the solution of Theism, the Almighty Source and Father of us all through the world of things, creating and training the world of Personalities. It is only in this scheme of thought that I can place and order the diverse world of reality, that I discern in other personalities, in myself and in the world of

Nature, giving their due right and worth to each and all. And when I think of the various forms of Theism I can find none so sane and reasonable and imaginatively appealing as the Theism of Jesus Christ. But to travel into that would carry me beyond the limits of this paper.

Die Gottesfrage im technischen Zeitalter

Hanns LILJE

Wer in lebendiger, persönlicher Anteilnahme den Weg der jungen Generation im letzten Jahrzehnt mitgegangen ist, dem will es beim Rückschauen scheinen, als sei er von einem Lande ins andere gewandert. Vor zehn Jahren glaubten wir, in der Hochblüte der deutschen Jugendbewegung unsere geistige Heimat gefunden zu haben; heute ist sie für viele fern und fremd geworden und mancher junge Mensch erfährt heute nur noch im Geschichtsunterricht in der Schule von ihr. Wir haben damals den Kampf gegen die Dämonie der Institutionen und die Verhärtungen des Lebens geführt und nach neuer, freier, schöpferischer "Ursprünglichkeit" des Lebens getrachtet; heute will es scheinen, als ob das alles vervielfacht und verstärkt wiedergekehrt sei. Was uns als unsere geistige Heimat erschien, ist Vergangenheit geworden; eine völlig neue Zeit liegt wie eine neue Heimat vor uns, in der wir uns nun zurechtzufinden versuchen.

In diesem Schicksal der jungen Generation spiegelt sich *der ganze Bruch der Zeiten* wieder. Das Ende der eigentlichen Jugendbewegung deckt einen verborgenen tiefen Irrtum auf; wir hatten der Kraft menschlicher Begeisterung das zugetraut, was nur der Geist Gottes tun kann; wir haben mit menschlichen Mitteln eine Welt zu ändern versucht, in der *wir* nur glauben können; wir haben nach "schöpferischer" Gestaltung getrachtet in einer Welt, in der man nur im Lichte der Vergebung leben kann. Und wenn wir auch alles köstliche Leben jener Zeit nicht vergessen wollen, so können wir doch

auch nichts anderes sagen, als dass dem "Aufbruch" wieder ein Ende gefolgt ist. Jedenfalls nützt uns alle blosser Erinnerung nichts. Wir können die Romantik und "Unmittelbarkeit" jener Jahre nicht zurückrufen. Wir müssen den herben Gegenwartswind geniessen lernen. *Wir müssen zu unserer Gegenwart ja sagen lernen*, zu ihren eisernen Härten, zu ihren Mängeln und Nöten, zu ihrer mancherlei Armut und auch zu ihrem neuen Lebenswillen. Aber wir müssen ein Ja sagen, das vor den Augen Gottes standhält. Und dabei erfahren wir es wieder neu, "dass eine jede Zeit ihre besondere Not hat, zu Gott zu kommen" (Althaus).

Wer das will, wer die besondere Not einer Generation verstehen will, die auch seine Not ist, hat keinen leichten Weg vor sich. Er darf die Mühsal nicht scheuen, die alles echte, schicksalsgebundene Nachdenken in sich schliesst. Als ein Ausschnitt aus dieser ernstesten Denkarbeit will auch das folgende verstanden sein.

1.

Welches sind nun die bedeutsamen Züge im geistigen Gesicht unserer Zeit?

Ihr hervorragendstes Merkmal ist zunächst die *Welt der Aeusserlichkeit*. Alles, was gross und bedeutend in der Gegenwart erscheint, ist nach aussen gewandt und drängt wiederum von aussen auf uns ein. Manches Geschlecht hat vor uns gelebt, dessen geistiges Auge ganz nach innen gewandt war, und dessen grosse Leistungen in der Welt der Innerlichkeit lagen; und ich glaube, dass fast alle grossen Epochen unserer Geschichte dazu gehören, die mittelalterliche Mystik wie die Reformation, Goethe wie Kant. Die Grösse der Gegenwart liegt in der Welt der Aeusserlichkeit, in dem, was man mit den Augen sehen und mit den Händen greifen kann. Wer nachts durch eine moderne Weltstadt geht, dem drängt sich diese Welt der Aeusserlichkeit in den Fluten von Lärm und Licht, in Reklame und Verkehr in alle Sinne. *Aber diese Welt der Aeusserlichkeit hat nicht nur diese abstossende Seite; sie hat auch eine fesselnde und eindrucksvolle Grossartigkeit nach einer anderen Seite.* Das

ist die Welt der Wirtschaft und der Technik, die vor anderen der Gegenwart das entscheidende Gepräge geben. Es wurde kürzlich einmal anlässlich einer Darstellung im neuen Reichswirtschaftsmuseum in Düsseldorf ausgeführt, dass die von den Vereinigten Stahlwerken in einem Jahr erzeugte Menge Stahl ausreichen würde, um eine stählerne Brücke vom Rhein bis nach Berlin zu bauen. Das ist nur ein Ausschnitt aus der grossen Welt der Technik und Wirtschaft.

Und auf allen anderen wichtigen Lebensgebieten ist es nicht anders. Wir sind *ein realistisches Geschlecht* geworden. Wir glauben nicht mehr an die Kraft und Gültigkeit von einzelnen Ideen und Idealen, weil wir so viele von ihnen in der neuen Welt haben kraftlos werden sehen. Wir wollen nicht Stimmungen, Eindrücke, Theorien, Dogmen; wir verlangen nach Tatsachen, nach Realitäten, nach Sichtbarkeiten. Und so wird im Menschen der Gegenwart gleichsam mit einem gewaltigen Magneten das eigentliche Leben von innen langsam und sicher nach aussen gezogen. Er will über die Ehe und das Leibesleben nicht mehr nach vorgefassten Meinungen reden, sondern er will sie vorurteilslos und realistisch ansehen, er will unser staatliches und politisches Leben nicht nach veralteten Idealen betrachten, sondern nach realistischen Notwendigkeiten; und vor allem im wirtschaftlichen Leben soll die sachliche Zweckmässigkeit und nichts sonst regieren. Und so liegt ihm eigentlich auch nichts daran, über den Sinn des Lebens nachzudenken; er will nicht über letzte und tiefste Lebensfragen nachdenken, er will auch nicht weiter gegen sie streiten — *er will leben*, das ist alles. Darum lebt er in der Welt der Aeusserlichkeit und lässt sich von ihren Gesetzen treiben. Wirtschaft und Technik wecken in ihm täglich neue Bedürfnisse und er kontrolliert sie nicht, sondern gibt ihnen nach. *Aber dieser praktische Materialismus hat das geistige Zentrum seiner Persönlichkeit vernichtet.* Die Ruhe und die Kraft einer in sich gesammelten Persönlichkeit sind Dinge von gestern geworden, die es heute nicht mehr gibt. Heute gibt es nur jene Vielgeschäftigkeit, die ein Zeugnis für die innere Leere und Planlosigkeit ist; das vielgerühmte moderne Lebenstempo hat sich den Menschen unterworfen.

In diesem schweren Kampf zwischen Aeusserlichkeit und Innerlichkeit, zwischen Sichtbarkeit und unsichtbarer Welt ist auch das junge Geschlecht verwickelt. Das stille, harmonische Reiferwerden, die Welt der Innerlichkeit, die in früheren Jugendgenerationen gelegentlich eine besondere Gefahr werden konnte, hat eigentlich keinen Platz mehr. Diese mächtige, gebieterische Welt der Aeusserlichkeit fordert den jungen Menschen zur Auseinandersetzung heraus, und es sind gewiss nicht die schlechtesten und schwächsten, die nun auch mit allen Kräften sich in dieser Gegenwart zurecht zu finden versuchen. Darum sind sie, wie einmal ein guter Kenner der heutigen jungen Generation gesagt hat, „früh von aussen geformt, doch innen ungerührt“. Aber das heisst nichts anderes, als dass sie den schweren Kampf zwischen Innerlichkeit und Aeusserlichkeit, zwischen Sichtbarkeit und Unsichtbarkeit kämpfen müssen.

Das wird vielleicht noch deutlicher, wenn man den anderen Zug im geistigen Gesicht der Gegenwart beachtet. Es ist die vielgenannte „neue Sachlichkeit“. Es ist schon ein oft misshandeltes Schlagwort geworden; und doch glaube ich, dass es das eigentliche Lebensgefühl unserer Epoche besonders deutlich zum Ausdruck bringt. Und man muss zugeben, dass in dieser neuen Sachlichkeit ein starker Lebenswille Gestalt gewinnt. Man kann ihn aus unserem neuen Baustil ablesen, der wohl zu den stärksten und besten Aeusserungen unseres heutigen kulturellen Lebens gehört. Alle Ornamentik, alles Spielerische, alles Sentimentale ist verschwunden; und mit einem mächtigen, manchmal hinreissenden Schwung ist alles der Sache untergeordnet, der das Bauwerk dienen soll. Und diese einfachen, klaren Horizontalen und Vertikalen haben uns in einer neuen eigenartigen Schönheit den Lebenswillen unserer Epoche verdeutlicht, ihren nüchternen Wirklichkeitssinn, ihre unmetaphysische Wirklichkeitsnähe und Energie. In dieser neuen Sachlichkeit versucht der Mensch, seine Sehnsucht, diese immer wieder aufgepeitschte, heimatlos gewordene, oft irreführte Sehnsucht in seiner Gewalt zu halten und doch über den Erstarrungstod der Resignation sich hinauszuzwingen zur Arbeit und zum Leben. Diese Sachlichkeit bedeutet Abkehr von aller bloss

romantischen Kulturkritik und völliges Ernstnehmen der geschichtlichen Lage, in der wir leben müssen. Sachlichkeit kennzeichnet das, was ein Volk in unserer Lage tun kann, wenn es weiter keine Quellen der Kraft hinter sich und in sich hat — wir bringen unser Herz zum Schweigen und wenden uns zum tathaften Leben, ohne grosse prinzipielle Ueberlegung, ohne Um- und Abwege ins Weltanschauliche, weil wir so viel Irrwege gesehen haben.

Aber auch hier ist ein Kampf entbrannt. Diese Sachlichkeit ist ein in seiner Art imponierender Lebenswille; aber es steht die Leere und Enttäuschung eines ganzen Geschlechts dahinter. *Es gibt nicht nur jenen starken Willen zur klaren, nüchternen Gestaltung, es gibt auch eine seelenlose und entseelende Sachlichkeit*, die das Leben um seinen Sinn bringt, die sich kritiklos von den mächtigen Wellen der technisch-wirtschaftlichen Zivilisation forttreiben lässt. Wenn diese seelenlose und entseelende Sachlichkeit über das junge Geschlecht hereinbricht, entsteht ein schwerer Schade. Dann "überfliegt sie in weltmännisch-spielender Scheinsicherheit die besten Jahre inneren Werdens". Und aus der modernen Sachlichkeit wird eine bis auf den Grund geistlose Geisteshaltung.

II.

Was ist unter allen diesen Einflüssen aus der Frage und dem Suchen nach Gott geworden? Es wäre von vornherein grundfalsch, wenn man annehmen wollte, dass es diese Frage heute nicht mehr gäbe. Es mag vieles, sehr vieles grundanders geworden sein; aber die Frage ist geblieben. *Auch dies Geschlecht kann nicht aufhören, nach Gott zu fragen*, mögen auch die Formen seiner Frage sich gewandelt haben. Die Jugend vor 10 Jahren hatte die Gottesfrage wohl gehört; aber sie hatte gleichsam Kränze darum gewunden, die von ihrer trotz allem noch ungebrochenen Vitalität Zeugnis gaben. Sie hatte die Gottesfrage verwoben mit Romantik oder Aesthetik oder gar — sonst hätte Bonsels nicht seinen Erfolg haben können — mit Erotik. Und nun

ist der Wind der Zeiten gekommen, und die Blätter und Blüten dieser Kränze sind verwelkt.

Aber ist es denn wirklich ein Unglück für das Fragen und Suchen nach Gott, wenn die Ideale der Menschen zerbrechen? Es ist gut, wenn die Wirklichkeit des Menschen aufgedeckt wird, wie sie ist. Wir haben im Grunde heute keine andere Frage, als wie sie zu allen Zeiten die Menschen umgetrieben hat. Die letzte Frage ist immer die Gottesfrage; was anders geworden ist, sind nur die Formen, die kulturellen Hintergründe. Aber gerade in dem Zusammenbruch einer ganzen Kultur erleben wir, was hinter ihr stand, was in ihren Formen wirklich lebte und was nur ein Scheinleben führte. Es ist wie in der modernen deutschen Baukunst: die Ornamente treten zurück, die Realitäten treten hervor. Zurück treten die Gefühle, die Ideologien, die Sentimentalitäten, die Phrasen, die Einkleidungen, Verteidigungen und Entschuldigungen, mit denen wir unser Leben lebten oder nur zu leben glaubten, oder uns über den Scheincharakter dieses Lebens täuschten. Hervortreten die Realitäten, die immer das Menschenleben und das Leben der Gemeinschaft bestimmen: Selbstsucht, Lebensgier, Furcht, Weltangst. Und es wird auch schon manchem wieder ahnend klar, welche Kräfte allein das Leben wirklich tragen können: dass man es nicht wie einen Raub an sich reissen kann, sondern dass man die Kraft zum Opfer und zur Hingabe des Lebens haben müsste, wenn es wieder einen Sinn haben sollte.

Solch ein Geschlecht ist eigentlich besser auf die Frage nach Gott vorbereitet, als manches andere, dass grossartiger, zuversichtlicher und vielleicht auch satter war. Die Armut und Schmucklosigkeit unseres inneren Lebens in der Gegenwart kann uns vielleicht *eher zu Hungernden und Dürstenden nach der Gerechtigkeit Gottes machen*, als wenn wir noch den Scheinreichtum unserer Ideologien von einst besässen. Soviel ist sicher, — wir fragen deutlicher, eindeutiger, manchmal auch brutaler. Aber wir fragen. Wir tun nicht mehr so, als wüssten wir alle Antworten auf die schwersten Lebensfragen selbst. Es sind viel mehr unter uns, die auch im Geheimen von dieser Frage nach Gott bewegt werden als der äussere Anblick unserer Zeit uns glauben lassen will.

Aber diese Frage hat einen ganz bestimmten Klang. *Unser Geschlecht fragt nur nach einem, nach Wirklichkeit.* Es will die Wirklichkeit des lebendigen Gottes, oder es wird nicht mit Gott rechnen. Das beweist der Kampf zwischen der Sichtbarkeit und der Unsichtbarkeit ebenso gut, wie das Ringen zwischen seelenloser und beseelter Sachlichkeit. Diese Frage nach der letzten Wirklichkeit hat einen doppelten Klang. Sie ist zuerst Frage nach dem Leben. Unser Geschlecht hat eigentlich nur ein Anliegen: *es will leben*, leben im Vollsinn des Wortes. Wer ihm dies Leben zeigen kann, der hat sein Herz. Das ist das Leitmotiv in den grossen wie in den kleinen Schöpfungen der Gegenwart, in den Bauten und der modernen Kunst, wie in den Romanen und den tausend kleinen kümmerlichen Versuchen der modernen Vergnügungsindustrie, dieses Leben im Vollsinn wenigstens in seinen Ersatzformen vorzutäuschen. Ist dies Verlangen aber nicht im Grunde auch ein Verlangen nach Gott? Wir wissen, dass es verirrt und verworren ist; aber ist nicht jeder, der nach vollem Leben verlangt, gerade in seinem Suchen ein Zeugnis dafür, dass Gott, der Schöpfer, allein das Leben geben kann?

In dieser Frage nach der Wirklichkeit liegt aber noch ein zweites, das gerade die Edleren der Gegenwart noch ernster bedrückt, *die Frage nach der Wahrheit.* Es gibt noch Menschen genug unter uns, die das völlige Zerbrechen der festen Ordnungen von einst schmerzlich empfinden. Es gibt auch unter der jungen Generation manchen, der in der Auflösung aller Normen und festen Massstäbe ernstlich und dringlich nach einer Richtschnur seines Lebens und Denkens verlangt, und der genau weiss, dass die grösste Armut der Gegenwart nicht in ihren mannigfachen Entgleisungen, sondern in ihrer *geistigen Plan- und Führungslosigkeit* zum Ausdruck kommt. Die katholische Kirche könnte nicht so manches Gewissen anziehen, wenn sie nicht diesem Verlangen nach fester Führung mit ihrer magischen Autorität entgegenkäme. Wie gerne würde mancher aus diesem Geschlecht sich beugen, wenn er eine grosse Autorität über sich wüsste, der er sich willig unterwerfen könnte!

Dies Verlangen nach Leben und Wahrheit ist nicht

einfach die Gottesfrage des technischen Zeitalters. Mancher, der die Leere eines Scheinlebens und die Qual der geistigen Richtungslosigkeit wohl empfindet, fragt deshalb doch noch nicht nach Gott. Die eigentliche, ernste, echte Frage nach Gott kann auch im technischen Zeitalter nur der Geist Gottes selber in den Herzen wecken. Aber, dass dies Verlangen nach vollem Leben und nach Wahrheit da ist, beweist uns, dass wir *auch im technischen Zeitalter an der Botschaft des Evangeliums nicht zu verzagen brauchen, sondern dass Gott jederzeit ihre besondere Not, aber darum auch ihre besondere Verheissung auflegt*. Und das ist eine heilsame und stärkende Erkenntnis.

III.

Was ist nun *unser Weg als christliche Jugend im technischen Zeitalter* ? Wir brauchen nicht künstlich aufzuhören, Kinder unseres Geschlechtes zu sein. Wir brauchen uns nicht ängstlich von der Realistik und der Sachlichkeit unseres Geschlechtes zurückhalten, aber wir müssen darum ringen und beten, dass uns in diesem Geschlechte mit seinem Verlangen nach Wirklichkeit, nach Leben und Wahrheit die eine grosse Wirklichkeit aufgeht, in der zugleich Wahrheit und Leben beschlossen ist, Gott in Jesus Christus. Wir wollen auch Realisten sein ; wer heute bewusst mitlebt, kann gar nichts anderes sein wollen. Aber wir wollen nicht den flachen, naiven Realismus der Aeusserlichkeit und Gedankenlosigkeit, sondern wir wollen um den Realismus ringen, der die Männer der Bibel, die Apostel und Propheten auszeichnet. Diese biblischen Persönlichkeiten haben alle in einem unverkennbaren eigenartigen Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein gelebt. Am schönsten ist es einmal im Hebräerbrieff von Mose so gesagt : „ Er hielt sich an den Unsichtbaren, als sähe er ihn “. An dem ganzen Leben, Denken und Reden dieser Männer spürte man es, dass sie hinter dieser Welt der Aeusserlichkeit eine andere Welt sahen, die ihnen viel wichtiger und wirklicher erschien, als die andere und die ihre ganze Haltung bestimmte, die ewige Welt Gottes. Darum redeten die Propheten nicht wie Kulturphilosophen, sondern wie Männer, die unter den Augen Gottes stehen, die Zeichen

der Zeit in ihrem Ernst verstanden. Darum stehen in den Schriften der Apostel nicht allgemeine weltanschauliche Erörterungen, sondern die „grossen Taten Gottes“, und ihr Stil ist Tatsachenstil. Wenn Paulus, der auch in einer grossen geschichtlichen Uebergangsepoche lebte, seine Zeit zu verstehen sucht, dann misst er sie an dem Bilde Gottes, des Schöpfers und seiner Schöpfung und sieht die ewige Bestimmung aller Geschichte und alles Lebens hinter der Verworrenheit und Verirrung seiner Gegenwart, weil er an den Gott glaubt, der den Himmel und die Erde und alles, was darinnen ist, gemacht hat. Wer in diesem *biblischen Realismus*, dem Realismus des Glaubens leben will, der muss seinen Standort auf einer der beiden grossen Kampffronten wählen, die die Zeit durchziehen. In dem grossen Kampf zwischen Sichtbarkeit und Unsichtbarkeit muss er sich aller verführerischen Sichtbarkeit entschlossen entziehen und die unsichtbare Welt Gottes in ihrer vollen Realität wählen. Und die Herrschaft der blossen Sichtbarkeit und Dinglichkeit wird sich nur an solchen Menschen brechen, die ihr nicht verfallen sind, sondern in der Furcht des unsichtbaren und doch gegenwärtigen Gottes leben. Wählen muss er in dem Kampf zwischen seelenloser und durchseelter, sinnentleerter und sinnerfüllter, glaubensloser und gläubiger Sachlichkeit. Er muss sein Herz freimachen von jener glaubenslosen Sachlichkeit, die im Grunde nicht bloss Armut und Leere, sondern auch Herzlosigkeit und Kraftlosigkeit ist. Und die Wirklichkeit Gottes kann ihm den Blick öffnen für die Wirklichkeit der Welt : es stehen sich nicht einfach nur Zweckmässigkeiten gegenüber, die so oder auch anders entschieden werden könnten, sondern es ringen unsichtbare Mächte um die Herrschaft in der Welt wie im Menschenherzen. Deshalb können wir nicht einfach vor unserer Gegenwart kapitulieren ; wir können es nicht vergessen, dass viele „Sachlichkeit“ nur Glaubenslosigkeit und mancher „Realismus“ nur Flucht vor dem lebendigen Gott ist. Wir können es nicht vergessen, dass wir auch in unserer Gegenwart, gerade in unserer Gegenwart zur *Entscheidung* aufgerufen sind.

Wenn wir unser Herz vor der Wirklichkeit des lebendigen Gottes beugen und unser Leben durch sie bestimmen lassen,

dann wird uns auch in unserer nüchternen, manchmal armen Welt die Herrlichkeit Gottes gross. Und seine grosse Welt rückt an die Stelle unserer kleinen Welt. Wir kommen aus der *Weltangst* heraus und leben in der *Furcht Gottes*. Damit werden wir zugleich frei von der Fron eines gehetzten, rationalisierten Lebens, und unser Leben wird zum *Gottesdienst*. Erst ein Leben, das von der Furcht frei geworden ist, von der Furcht vor den Menschen und den Dingen, ist ein wirkliches volles Leben. Wir werden auch frei von den Fesseln, die jeder *Lebensgenuss* uns auflegt. Das ist ein Grundzug unserer Gegenwart, dass sie das Leben wie einen Raub an sich reissen und geniessen will. Wirkliche Freude am Leben aber kann nur da sein, wo man hinter allen Aeusserlichkeiten des Lebens Gott den Schöpfer sieht und verehrt und in seinen Ordnungen zu leben bereit ist. Das Leben verliert erst dann seine Dämonie und sein Grauen, wenn wir es nicht mehr im *Genuss* für uns haben wollen, sondern wenn wir es dem Herrn alles Lebens bewusst und treulich zum *Opfer* bringen. Erst dann kommt es heraus aus aller Sinnlosigkeit und bekommt, was es ohne das nie haben kann, einen ewigen Sinn. Und endlich — der Individualismus der vergangenen Generation ist zerbrochen; der Kollektivismus der neuen Generation wird auch keinen Bestand haben, sondern nur zu einer Verknechtung des Menschen unter den Menschen führen, wenn nicht aus der ewigen Welt Gottes eine ganz andere, tiefere Ordnung an seine Stelle tritt, die Gemeinde.

Auch über den Sinn dieser Epoche ist vor den Augen Gottes schon entschieden. Auch unsere Gegenwart hat nur dann einen Sinn, wenn sie sich vor der ewigen Offenbarung Gottes in Jesus Christus beugt. Auch sie steht unter dem Licht, das von dem Kreuzeshügel über die ganze Menschheitsgeschichte fällt; Gott *hat* in Christus der Welt einen Sinn gegeben und nun ist nicht mehr die äussere Welt, die Welt des Vordergrundes und der Dinglichkeit, die eigentliche wirkliche Welt, sondern nun ist die neue Welt Gottes die eigentliche Welt, in der die Kräfte der Auferstehung Jesu und der geschehenen Versöhnung wirksam sind. Gott hat in Jesus Christus *Wahrheit* und *Leben* geschaffen, Wahrheit,

die trägt und führt, Leben, das — nach Jesus eigenem Wort — Leben im Vollsinn, im Ueberfluss ist. Wir wollen Ihn preisen, dass Er alle Unwirklichkeit und alle Scheinwirklichkeit entmächtigt hat, und wollen uns durch Seinen Geist das Herz stärken lassen, dass wir in Seiner Wahrheit und Seinem Leben rüstig wandeln !

Résumé

Le « Mouvement de Jeunesse » allemand, en plein épanouissement il y a 13 ans, et où nous avons cru trouver notre patrie spirituelle, est aujourd'hui chose du passé. Nous aspirions alors au retour vers une vie spontanée, libre et féconde ; nous luttions contre les démons des institutions et contre la pétrification de la vie. Tout ce que nous combattions semble revenu avec une force quadruplée. Les temps nouveaux sont devant nous, nouvelle patrie où nous essayons de nous orienter. Dans ce destin de la jeune génération, se reflète toute la faillite de notre temps. Nous avons commis la profonde erreur de prêter à l'enthousiasme humain une force que seul l'Esprit de Dieu possède. Nous visions à être des créateurs dans un monde où on ne peut vivre qu'à la lumière du pardon. Aujourd'hui d'ailleurs, tous nos regrets seraient impuissants à ressusciter le passé. Nous devons apprendre à accepter notre époque avec ses rigueurs, ses imperfections, sa détresse, son indigence sur tant de points et aussi son renouveau de volonté de vivre. Mais notre acquiescement doit être tel qu'il ne redoute pas le regard de Dieu. Quiconque veut comprendre les besoins particuliers d'une génération, qui sont aussi les siens, a devant lui une tâche difficile et ne doit pas craindre l'effort des réflexions graves.

I.

Notre temps est avant tout celui de la vie extérieure. Bien des générations nous ont précédés, dont le regard était concentré sur la vie intérieure ; ce fut le cas dans presque toutes les grandes époques de notre histoire. La puissance des temps présents est celle des choses extérieures ; si vous traversez de nuit une ville moderne, elles s'imposent à tous vos sens par le bruit, la lumière, le mouvement, la réclame. Mais ce monde des choses extérieures n'a pas que ce côté repoussant ; il a, par ailleurs, sa grandeur attachante et impressionnante, par exemple dans le domaine économique et technique.

Nous sommes devenus une génération réaliste. Nous ne voulons ni sentiments, ni impressions, ni théories, ni dogmes ; nous exigeons des faits et des réalités visibles. En tout : mariage, vie physique, politique, l'homme moderne veut juger non selon des opinions admises et un idéal périmé, mais par lui-même et conformément aux nécessités réalistes. Dans le domaine économique surtout, seule l'utilité pratique fait loi. L'homme ne veut plus réfléchir au sens de la vie, ni en discuter les ultimes problèmes : il veut vivre. Mais, par ce matérialisme pratique, il détruit le foyer de sa vie spirituelle.

Dans cette lutte douloureuse entre la vie extérieure et la vie intérieure, la jeunesse aussi est impliquée. Le développement paisible et harmonieux de la personnalité intérieure est chose du passé, et ce ne sont ni les plus mauvais ni les plus faibles qui s'efforcent de s'adapter au temps présent. La jeunesse d'aujourd'hui est de formation extérieure précoce, mais sa vie intérieure est encore une page blanche. Elle devra subir le conflit qui met aux prises la vie extérieure et la vie intérieure, le monde visible et le monde invisible.

Un autre trait frappant de notre époque est le « nouvel objectivisme » et il faut avouer que celui-ci a donné corps à une puissante volonté de vivre. Nous en avons un exemple dans notre architecture, l'une des meilleures manifestations de notre culture actuelle. Dans sa beauté spéciale, simple, forte, pleine d'élan, elle soumet tout à l'utilité de l'objet auquel elle est destinée.

Dans son nouvel objectivisme, l'homme cherche un dérivatif à sa nostalgie. Cet objectivisme est caractéristique d'un peuple qui n'a pas d'autre source d'énergie derrière soi ou en soi. Nous imposons silence à notre cœur et nous nous tournons vers la vie active, sans grande réflexion sur les principes et sans chercher de détours, ayant connu trop de fausses routes. Mais ici aussi s'allume un conflit. Cet objectivisme, malgré son imposante énergie vitale, cache derrière lui le vide et la désillusion d'une génération entière. Il existe, en effet, une forme d'objectivisme sans âme et déprimante, qui enlève à la vie son sens véritable et se laisse entraîner par le flot de la civilisation technique et économique. C'est là le danger qui menace la jeune génération.

II.

Qu'est devenue, parmi toutes ces tendances, la recherche de Dieu ? Beaucoup de choses ont pu se transformer de fond en comble ; mais cette génération, comme les précédentes, ne peut cesser de chercher Dieu. Les préoccupations que la jeunesse d'il y a dix ans mêlait à sa conception de Dieu ont été emportées dans la tourmente

des temps. Mais est-il néfaste à la recherche de Dieu que l'idéal des hommes s'écroule ? La question ultime demeure toujours la question de Dieu. Il est bon que l'homme se révèle tel qu'il est, et, dans la faillite de toute une culture, nous apercevons ce qu'elle nous masquait, tout ce qui nous trompait sur le caractère factice de notre vie. Aujourd'hui apparaissent les réalités qui déterminent toujours la vie de l'homme et de la société : égoïsme, avidité, crainte, angoisse du siècle. Et quelques-uns recommencent à avoir le pressentiment des forces qui seules peuvent soutenir la vie et à comprendre ce que celle-ci implique de sacrifice si on veut qu'elle retrouve son sens. Le dénuement de notre vie intérieure nous rend peut-être plus assoiffés de la justice de Dieu que nous ne l'étions quand nous possédions encore le royaume illusoire de nos idéologies. Beaucoup plus nombreux sont, parmi nous, ceux que tourmente en secret la question de Dieu que les apparences de notre temps ne le laisseraient croire. Mais leur appel rend un son bien défini : notre génération réclame des réalités ; elle exige la réalité du Dieu vivant, ou elle ne tiendra pas compte de Lui. Ce besoin des réalités ultimes est d'abord un besoin de vie. Notre génération veut vivre au sens complet du mot ; ce « leitmotiv » revient dans toutes les activités de notre temps. N'y a-t-il pas, au fond de ce besoin de vie complète, une aspiration égarée et confuse vers Dieu ? Mais ce qui, dans leur recherche de la réalité, tourmente surtout les esprits les plus nobles, est le besoin de vérité. Dans le relâchement de toutes les normes, ils réclament une règle de conduite et de pensée, sachant que la plus grande lacune de notre temps est son absence de plan et de direction. C'est ce qui explique l'attrait de l'Eglise catholique sur certaines consciences. Combien ne demanderaient qu'à se soumettre à une autorité puissante, s'il en savaient une ! Toutefois, ceux qui souffrent des conditions présentes n'aspirent pas tous à Dieu ; seul Son Esprit peut éveiller les cœurs. Mais le besoin de vie complète et de vérité prouve que, même dans notre siècle de la technique, il n'y a pas à lieu de désespérer du Message de l'Evangile et que Dieu permet que chaque époque ait sa détresse mais aussi sa promesse particulières.

III.

Quelle est, en tant que jeunesse chrétienne, notre voie dans ce siècle de la technique ? Nous n'avons besoin ni de renoncer à être les enfants de notre génération, ni de redouter son objectivisme et son réalisme ; mais nous devons lutter et prier pour que se lève la grande réalité unique qui renferme la vie et la vérité : Dieu en Jésus-Christ. Notre réalisme sera non celui de la vie extérieure et de l'irréflexion, mais celui des hommes de la Bible, qui, au delà de ce monde

extérieur, en voyaient un autre bien plus important et plus vrai, le monde éternel de Dieu. Quand Saint Paul, qui vécut aussi à une grande époque de transition historique, essayait de la comprendre, il la mesurait à l'image du Créateur et de Sa Création et, parce qu'il croyait en Dieu, il voyait sous la confusion et les erreurs de son temps, l'éternelle destinée de toute Histoire et de toute vie.

Quiconque veut vivre dans ce réalisme de la Foi, devra, dans le conflit entre le visible et l'invisible, se décider pour le monde invisible de Dieu. Il devra renoncer à l'objectivisme sans foi, qui est non seulement indigence et inanité, mais encore manque de cœur et de force. D'invisibles puissances luttent pour la maîtrise du monde comme elles luttent dans le cœur de l'homme. N'oublions pas qu'à notre époque tout particulièrement, nous sommes appelés à nous décider. Si nous courbons nos cœurs devant la réalité du Dieu vivant, Sa magnificence pénétrera notre vie si souvent indigente. L'angoisse du siècle fera place à la crainte de Dieu et notre vie deviendra un service divin. Nous serons libérés du joug des jouissances terrestres. La vie ne devient vraiment heureuse, elle ne perd ses démons et ses terreurs, elle ne prend son sens éternel que lorsqu'au lieu de nous y attacher pour en jouir, nous l'offrons à Dieu en sacrifice. L'individualisme de la génération précédente s'est effondré ; le collectivisme de la nouvelle ne conduira qu'à l'asservissement de l'homme par l'homme s'il ne se transforme en une autre organisation émanée de Dieu : la communauté. Notre époque n'aura de sens que si elle se courbe devant la Révélation de Dieu en Jésus-Christ. Dieu a donné en Christ un sens au monde. Le monde véritable n'est plus celui des choses extérieures et matérielles, mais celui de Dieu, où sont agissantes les forces de la Résurrection et de la Réconciliation consommée. En Jésus, Dieu a créé la Vérité et la Vie. Louons-Le d'avoir rendu impuissants tout mensonge et tout faux-semblant et, le cœur raffermi par Son Esprit, suivons Sa Vérité et Sa Vie.

Reflections on the Christian Message in the Present World Drama¹

John A. MACKAY

I. *Aspects of the World Stage.*

Rarely, if ever, and certainly never on such a wide scale, has the human stage presented so chaotic and paradoxical a drama as that which is being enacted in our time. In a sense and to a degree of which Shakespeare never dreamed "All the World's a Stage", a single stage in which a common human drama is being played. As a contemporary thinker has put it, our world has become an "oecumenical organism". East and West, so long regarded as impermeable to each other's influence and interests, have reached the point of mutual interpenetration. The symbolic "Chauffeur" has gone East and the Sadhu has come West. With the sweep around the globe of great oecumenical currents, purely local history has come to an end. For weal or for woe, humanity is one; only its newly achieved unity is not that of joy or of love, but rather that of pain and of struggle. The most universal and symbolic word of our age is "problem". And the most shattering problem of all is that presented by the co-existence of so many antithetically different tendencies on the surface of life. The only discoverable hero in the universal drama of our day is Paradox.

In the political realm, the gravest of problems and the strangest of paradoxes abound. When it was believed that the idea of democracy had become a permanent possession of human thought and was fast becoming a political reality, there suddenly appeared the opposing systems of Fascism

¹ This article is part of a statement written by Dr. John A. Mackay in collaboration with a group of Y.M.C.A. leaders of various countries, as a contribution to the discussions on the message of the Y.M.C.A. world movement. Its bearing on the theme of the present number and on the discussions on the message of the Federation is evident.

and Bolshevism, both of which deny the elementary principles of democratic government. An increasing enthusiasm for internationalism is one of the glorious characteristics of our time, yet it is tragically off-set by a growing nationalism and provincialism in many quarters of the world. At the very time in which it was believed that the battles of freedom of thought and of religious liberty had been won for ever, there has broken out in a great modern state one of the most violent religious persecutions of all time.

In the economic realm, countries interested in humanity in general, leave grave human problems untouched within their own frontiers.

In the realm of thought and culture, similar problems and paradoxes appear. It becomes increasingly evident that the "modern mind" is not a reality but a myth, and that the ordinary, light-hearted idea of progress is equally so. Tolerance of all opinions would seem to be the only attitude that is theoretically justifiable, but the great dynamic movements of our time, the only movements which appear to be enlisting the enthusiasm of strong men, are based on burning convictions and tend to be intolerant. At a time when we are asked, in the name of scientific method, to banish all anthropomorphism from our thinking about the divine, scientists, themselves, suddenly become anthropomorphic by the discovery that the most ultimate knowledge they can reach is purely symbolical. We find, moreover, that when so-called "moderns" think themselves to be thoroughly emancipated, having cast aside all traditional taboos, and with their iconoclastic hammer forged themselves a way to freedom, they come face to face with a new problem. What shall they do with their liberty, gripped as they are by the most paralysing inhibition of all, that derived from the grim denial that life has any meaning? No less significant is the fact that many thinkers display a renaissance of interest in ultimate problems, and frequently scientists turn philosophers in their search for the divine and transcendent, not a few contemporary thinkers repudiate everything transcendent and bow God and absolute values out of court. One representative writer shouts from the crow's nest of our age "God

in sight ", while another equally representative exclaims " whirl is king, having driven out Zeus ".

The situation in the religious world is no less paradoxical. There has appeared among Christian thinkers in the Western world a new interest in the religions of the Orient, coupled with a disposition to eulogize and conserve their values at the very time that those religions seem doomed to destruction by the influence of Western Secularism. When a large section of the Church had come to regard the Bible as no more than a collection of religious documents, however great their value, new voices suddenly thunder out that it contains the Word of God in a unique and absolute sense. These make Christian Theology the study of the " Word " at a moment in which other Christian thinkers devote their chief attention to religion, in general, with a view to investigating its permanent values. Quite as potent and significant as the present-day tendency toward ecclesiastical unity is the movement towards ecclesiastical exclusiveness. While in some quarters a decidedly anti-ecclesiastical tendency is the order of the day, even among people interested in religion, and the number of the unchurched increases, in others a growing institutional loyalty makes its appearance in religious life. While the laity in some countries show an increasing interest in religion and the Church, some of the churches in those countries find it difficult to secure candidates for orders. How strangely paradoxical it is that at the very time when Christian Missions to non-Christian lands have reached their zenith, many of the people of those lands turn a deaf ear to the Christian Message, because of what they know about conditions in the lands from which the Missions have come. How equally paradoxical that multitudes of people who thought that Christianity was simply service, by which they meant doing all the good possible, are now becoming profoundly pessimistic about the world's future, through their inability to reproduce themselves in other lives. Yet underneath this spectral scene a surge of yearning is clearly audible. There is dissatisfaction with the actual and a passion for what is envisaged as the real. There is a wholesome hatred of shams. Some pine for truth as the supreme

reality ; others for economic justice ; others for human brotherhood ; others for the attainment of freedom ; many pine for the living God.

As if corresponding to this passionate quest that eddies in human hearts today, a master light flashes across the scared surface of the world. It is the light that shines from the face of the Christ. This paradoxical Personality rivets the gaze of earnest hearts in our time as does none other. His achievements down the ages give Him a title to be taken seriously now, for all that is most vital in the life of the Western world goes back to Him. Not even Russian Communism which would extirpate His memory from the earth could have itself come to birth apart from Him who first placed infinite value on humble souls and preferred the simple and oppressed to the wise and powerful. The dark sins of Christendom cannot be laid to His charge, but to the scant seriousness with which He has been obeyed by those who called themselves His followers. Earnest men are coming to a full appreciation of this fact, so that within Christendom and beyond it — among those who believe in the Christian Church and Christianity and among those who do not — a wistful and expectant gaze is directed towards that unique and universal Figure. That many Hindus should regard "Christlikeness" as the supreme criterion of human worth and that Henri Barbusse, the French Communist, one of the most iconoclastic figures of our time outside Soviet Russia should have claimed Jesus for himself and his party, is as great a paradox as the others we have mentioned, but it is a paradox that throws a beam of hope across the world stage.

II. *Towards the Rediscovery and Restatement of our Christian Heritage.*

A Swiss writer once made the remark that the earth cannot be conquered save in the name of Heaven. A growing consciousness that the greatest need of our time is a transcendent truth confirms the thesis of Amiel. Fixed stars are needed above the ocean highway of life for the great adventure of spiritual discovery and achievement, as much as they are

needed by navigators on other oceans. And as Christians, we believe there are such stars in our firmament. We have read of a certain nomadic tribe in ancient times who, when the winds had blotted out the path across the desert sands, would wait for the stars to come out. Ours is a moment very similar to theirs : when the sweep of relativism threatens to obliterate the traces of a sure road to anywhere, let us, too, lift up our eyes to the stars.

Jesus Christ is our fixed star. We did not create Him ; He forms part of our common Christian heritage. He is central and luminous in our map of the spiritual universe. Have we ever reflected upon the fact that what is at the heart of Christianity is not a philosophy of life, nor even an idea concerning God, but a concrete palpitating Personality ? Other religions were born of ideas ; ours was born of a Personality. Our Christian heritage does not consist of abstract truths, but of the personal incarnate Truth. Only in the category of personality can we find absolute truth. Only a concrete type and quality of life is truly luminous and revealing. An abstract idea is never really so. So *Ecce homo !* Behold the Man, the Word, the Son !

As we look closely at Him, we discover that the most original thing about Jesus is not His teaching but Himself. Many of His ideas can be paralleled by those of other great religious teachers of mankind, but He, Himself, is without a peer. He is absolutely unique, both as to the type of life He lived and as to the importance He attributed to His Own Person and life.

Two things impress us in the new and original type of life which Jesus lived. One of these appears in relation to men. We might call it creative or redemptive love. The quality of Jesus' love was such that it did not demand loveliness as a prerequisite for its expression. He loved unlovable and unlovely people with an affection so intense, that it recreated them. It could do so because it was love at a cost. Love at its highest is always love at a cost — love which cares passionately for people in spite of popular opinion and personal knowledge regarding them. It was thus that Jesus loved Zaccheus and the Magdalene and His love transformed them.

He practised, also the love of enemies and went to the Cross for enemies and friends alike. The Crucified has, in this way, become the great Reconciler.

The other impressive feature in the life of Jesus is that it was founded and grounded in the living God of Hebrew prophetic tradition. His life, in all its manifestations, was what it was because of His perception and experience of God. It was His sense of God which gave meaning and value to life and to men. It was His filial obedience to one who was both His Father and His Lord which gave Him that unique sense of Mission which marked His life.

It is of paramount importance to observe and emphasize the fact that for Jesus, the most original thing about God was that His love was of a creative and redemptive quality. In the most matchless and moving of His parables, those that form the trilogy in Luke XV., He gives us emblems of God's creative love-passion and His intense joy over the restoration of the spiritually lost. If God is like Jesus in His passion for men, then the work we try to do for men is grounded on what is most ultimate in the spiritual universe, the reality of creative love, and it must reflect on that account the same quality. This is extremely important. For if to be perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect means, above all else, to share God's creative love-passion, then we cannot rest satisfied with simply being helpful to men and in contributing to the harmonious development of their personality. It is one thing to do good to others ; it is quite another thing to turn others into doers of good. Something much higher than ethical decency must be our goal. Our work for others can only be finally successful if we succeed in reproducing in their lives the creative love passion of God.

But is life possible at this creative level ? The effort to be like Jesus and to act as He did, the passion to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, is, we are told, driving many to despair. Is the Christ life really attainable ? , is what many ask. If it really is, who is capable of carrying on indefinitely an effort to put it into practice ? And how often is it the case that the people we do most for remain selfish and un-Christlike.

We feel that the time has come for proclaiming the conviction that the attempt to reduce Christianity to the simple imitation of Jesus or to the service of men carried on in His spirit or in accordance with His principles is to rob it of its most unique and creative feature. The question of ideal is one thing, but the question of power to realise an ideal is quite another. We see clearly what the ideal life should be, but is it in the power of human nature, as we know it, to realise this ideal? Light and aspiration we possess, but achieving strength we lack. Moreover, the very fact that the world stage is becoming increasingly one makes life more complicated and human beings more difficult to deal with.

It is just at this point and in this connection that we feel it to be of the utmost importance that attention should be drawn to the other aspect of Jesus' originality. He had an entirely unique conception of His own significance. He not only painted a portrait of God which is in perfect agreement with the kind of person He, Himself, was; He also believed that He knew God as none other did, that God had given him a specific mission to fulfil, that that mission could not be completely fulfilled except by His death. However much more Jesus thought about Himself, He thought that at least, and in so thinking, provided ample basis for the classic and illuminating words of His two greatest interpreters who wrote: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" and "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us".

If in Christ God entered into human history in a unique and redemptive way; if Christ, with all He was and said and did is the absolute Word of God — certain consequences follow which are of the greatest importance for the life of the world and of our Movement in particular. These consequences are especially related to our interpretation of the familiar phrase "to follow Jesus", a phrase which has become so colourless that Youth is rejecting it as pious and unmeaning claptrap. For youth asks who is Jesus and why should we follow Him and what will happen if we do?

To follow Jesus is to believe in Him utterly. It is to

stake our lives on His being God's creative gift to the world and to accept Him as such. It is to find God in Him, a God who forgives us and makes us His sons in a new and creative sense. It is to identify our lives with the Divine life, becoming willing and loyal organs of the same redemptive purpose that expressed itself in Jesus' Person, teachings, death and resurrection. It is to find our citizenship in the eternal order.

To follow Jesus is to abandon ourselves in life and activity to the interests that cost Him the Cross. It involves much more than the acceptance of Christian principles and the profession of Orthodox statements about Christ ; it involves putting God and His purposes as revealed in Christ in the centre of our lives. It means a willingness, on every occasion, to go beyond the first mile of ethical duty into the second mile of Christian sacrifice. It means to work for a Christ-like world in which the spirit of Jesus shall be regnant in all spheres of human activity, resolved to accept the bitterest consequences that may fall to our lot because of such loyalty. It means, as He Himself said, to take up our cross daily and follow Him.

It is our conviction that the present world situation offers a greater challenge than any other that has ever existed to be truly and utterly Christian. While fully recognising that no permanent spiritual advance can be achieved by the reorganisation of human society in accordance with the mind of Christ, while man, himself, remains unchanged — and that only God can change man — we consider it to be the sacred duty of every Christian, to apply the principles of Jesus Christ in the sphere of business, of literature, of politics and of the Church. The sternness of the present hour, in which Christianity is considered by many to be a spent force, requires that Christians should scan afresh their temple courts and look into these apocalyptic eyes which blaze as a "flame of fire".

To follow Jesus is to attain the solution of the most difficult problem of life and religion, the problem of power. Utter loyalty to Him lays our lives open to the creative influence of the Spirit of God, which is also the Spirit of Christ, in the

living present. We become God's fellow-workers in the new spiritual world He is creating. The Spirit guides us into all truth and His holy inspiration leads us into the new lines of service that are needed in our time.

So to interpret Christ and Christian discipleship is to reach the inevitable conclusion that at the present juncture, the supreme mission of an organisation such as ours should be that of bringing the Youth of our time face to face with the living God and His purpose for human life and society. And to those who discover themselves and life's meaning in the light of God, we must emphasise not the privileges but the cross of being a part of this fellowship summoning them from the beginning to dangerous and heroic service under the leadership of God, Himself. For we shall succeed in serving humanity in the measure in which we lead humanity to serve God.

Résumé

Il ne s'est peut-être jamais, sur la scène du monde, joué de drame aussi chaotique et paradoxal que celui d'aujourd'hui. L'Orient et l'Occident, si longtemps étrangers l'un à l'autre, se pénètrent maintenant mutuellement. Le monde présente une scène unique, où se joue le drame de l'humanité entière. L'histoire purement locale a été entraînée par les grands courants internationaux qui balayent l'univers. Pour son bonheur ou son malheur, l'humanité est une ; mais cette unité de fraîche date est celle de la douleur et de la lutte, non de la joie et de l'amour. Le mot le plus symbolique de notre époque est le *problème* ; le seul héros apparent du drame universel est le *paradoxe*.

En effet, les problèmes les plus ardues et les paradoxes les plus étranges abondent dans le domaine politique. Alors que le principe démocratique semblait théoriquement admis pour toujours et devenait rapidement une réalité politique, apparurent le fascisme et le bolchevisme qui en sont la négation. L'enthousiasme croissant pour l'internationalisme a sa contre-partie tragique dans le nationalisme et le régionalisme qui progressent en tant d'endroits. Au moment même où on croyait la cause de la liberté de conscience définitivement gagnée, ont éclaté, dans un grand Etat, les plus violentes persécutions religieuses de tous les temps.

Nous rencontrons les mêmes problèmes et les mêmes paradoxes dans le domaine économique et aussi dans celui de la pensée et de la culture. En apparence, une tolérance absolue serait la seule attitude qui se justifie théoriquement ; mais, en fait, les grands mouvements dynamiques, les seuls qui fassent des recrues parmi les forts, se fondent sur d'ardentes convictions et tendent à l'intolérance. On nous demande au nom de la science, de bannir tout anthropomorphisme de notre conception du divin au moment où les savants eux-mêmes découvrent que la connaissance à laquelle ils peuvent atteindre est purement symbolique. Les esprits soi-disant « modernes », ayant rejeté tous les taboos traditionnels ne savent que faire de leur liberté, paralysés par le plus fort des sentiments inhibitifs, celui que la vie est dépourvue de sens. Alors que chez tant de penseurs et de savants renaît l'intérêt pour les problèmes ultimes, pour la recherche du divin et du transcendantal, nombreux aussi sont ceux qui répudient tout surnaturel, toute idée de Dieu, toute valeur absolue.

Dans le monde religieux, même situation paradoxale, le renouveau d'intérêt dont les penseurs d'Occident témoignent pour les religions de l'Orient se manifeste au moment où ces mêmes religions semblent vouées à la destruction par l'influence de la libre pensée occidentale. Alors qu'un nombre important de membres de l'Eglise en étaient venus à considérer la Bible comme une collection de documents religieux, soudain des voix se firent entendre, la proclamant la parole de Dieu au sens unique et absolu du mot. Certains chrétiens font de la théologie l'étude du Verbe, d'autres s'attachent à l'investigation des valeurs permanentes de la religion.

Les tendances à l'exclusivisme ecclésiastique ne sont ni moins fortes, ni moins significatives que le mouvement en faveur de l'union des Eglises. Dans certains pays où l'intérêt des laïques pour l'Eglise est en progrès, le recrutement ecclésiastique de certaines fractions de l'Eglise devient difficile. Au moment même où les Missions chrétiennes sont à leur apogée, beaucoup deviennent sourds au Message chrétien à cause de ce qu'ils savent sur les conditions de la vie dans les pays d'où viennent les missionnaires. Il n'est pas moins paradoxal de voir tant de gens qui croyaient qu'être chrétien c'était seulement servir, devenus profondément pessimistes sur l'avenir du monde à cause de leur inaptitude à transmettre leur idéal.

Sous ces apparences contradictoires, on distingue un mécontentement de l'état de choses actuel, un désir passionné de réalité, une haine salutaire de la feinte. Quelques-uns aspirent à la vérité, d'autres à la justice sociale, d'autres à la fraternité humaine, d'autres à la liberté, beaucoup au Dieu vivant. Comme en réponse à cette recherche passionnée qui trouble le cœur des hommes, une lumière toute puis-

sante, émanant du visage du Christ projette ses rayons sur la face épouvantée du globe. De nos jours, sa personnalité unique attire les cœurs sérieux comme ne le fait aucune autre, car tout ce qu'il y a de plus vital dans la vie de l'Occident est dû à Lui. Même le communisme russe, qui voudrait anéantir sa mémoire sur terre, n'aurait pu naître sans Lui, qui a attribué aux humbles une valeur infinie et préféré les simples et les opprimés aux sages et aux puissants. Ce n'est point Lui, mais ceux qui Lui ont mal obéi qui sont responsables des péchés de la chrétienté. Partout, les esprits sérieux commencent à s'en rendre compte ; aussi, chrétiens et non chrétiens dirigent vers cette Figure unique et universelle leurs regards pleins d'ardeur et d'espérance. Beaucoup d'Hindous considèrent la ressemblance avec le Christ comme le critère suprême de la valeur humaine ; Barbusse, l'un des plus grands iconoclastes de notre temps, revendique Jésus en son nom et au nom de son parti. Paradoxes aussi, mais qui éclaireront la scène du monde d'un rayon d'espoir.

Le sentiment croissant que notre époque a besoin avant tout d'une vérité transcendante confirme la thèse d'Amiel, selon laquelle la terre ne saurait être conquise qu'au nom du Ciel. Pareils aux navigateurs perdus sur l'Océan, nous avons besoin d'étoiles fixes et, comme chrétiens, nous croyons qu'il en existe à notre firmament. Jésus-Christ est notre étoile fixe. Nous ne l'avons pas créé, Il fait partie de notre commun héritage chrétien. Il est le centre lumineux de notre mappemonde de l'univers spirituel. D'autres religions ont été fondées sur des idées, la nôtre sur une Personnalité concrète et vivante ; notre patrimoine ne se compose pas de vérités abstraites, mais de la Vérité personnelle incarnée. Nous ne trouverons la vérité absolue que dans la catégorie de la personnalité, plus lumineuse et plus révélatrice qu'aucune idée abstraite. Donc, Ecce Homo ! Voici l'Homme, le Verbe, le Fils !

Ce qu'il y a de plus original en Jésus, c'est non son enseignement mais sa personne. Il est unique par son mode de vie comme par l'importance que Lui-même attachait à sa personne et à sa vie. Deux traits nous frappent particulièrement dans cette vie. Le premier est son amour créateur et rédempteur. Il aimait ceux que rien ne porte à aimer d'un amour si intense qu'il en faisait de nouvelles créatures. Ceci n'était possible que parce qu'Il les aimait du véritable amour, qui implique toujours le sacrifice. Crucifié pour ses ennemis comme pour ses amis, Il est devenu le grand Réconciliateur. L'autre trait qui nous frappe dans la vie de Jésus, est qu'elle était fondée sur la tradition prophétique du Dieu vivant des Hébreux. C'est de sa conception de Dieu que découlent pour Lui la valeur et la significa-

tion de la vie humaine. C'est son obéissance à Celui qui était son Père et son Seigneur qui a fait de sa vie une mission unique.

Il faut mettre l'accent sur ce fait que, pour Jésus, ce qu'il y avait de plus unique en Dieu était la qualité créatrice et rédemptrice de son amour ; c'est ce qu'Il a démontré dans les plus émouvantes de ses paraboles (Luc, XV). Si Dieu est comme Jésus, notre service envers les hommes se fonde sur ce qu'il y a d'essentiel dans l'univers spirituel, la réalité de l'amour créateur. C'est là un point extrêmement important, car alors nous ne pouvons nous contenter de faire du bien aux hommes, nous devons faire d'eux des hommes de bien. Il faut que notre idéal s'élève de beaucoup au-dessus de la bonne tenue morale ; nous devons éveiller dans la vie d'autrui le divin amour créateur.

Mais beaucoup, nous dit-on, sont poussés au désespoir dans leur effort pour agir comme Jésus, dans leur désir passionné d'être parfaits comme le Père qui est au Ciel. Une vie à l'image de celle du Christ est-elle vraiment possible ? Qui peut persévérer dans ses efforts pour la pratiquer ? Combien il est fréquent de voir ceux pour lesquels nous nous sommes le plus dépensés demeurer dans leur égoïsme !

Le temps est venu de proclamer qu'en essayant de réduire le christianisme à une imitation de Jésus ou au service des hommes pratiqué dans son esprit, on le dépouille d'un de ses caractères essentiels. L'idéal est une chose, mais le pouvoir de le réaliser en est une autre. Nous possédons la connaissance et l'aspiration, mais non la force qui réalise. En outre, en s'étendant et se multipliant, les relations entre humains sont devenues plus complexes et plus difficiles.

C'est pourquoi il nous semble de toute importance d'attirer l'attention sur un autre côté de la personne de Jésus. Il a cru à sa connaissance unique de Dieu, Il a cru à la mission spéciale dont Il était chargé, Il a cru à la nécessité de sa mort. C'est cette conception qui s'exprime dans les paroles de ses deux plus grands interprètes : « Dieu était en Christ, réconciliant le monde avec lui-même » et « La Parole a été faite chair, et elle a habité parmi nous ».

Si le Christ joue dans l'histoire humaine un rôle unique et rédempteur, s'Il est, au sens absolu, la Parole de Dieu, il en découle des conséquences de la plus grande importance pour le monde entier et pour notre interprétation de la formule consacrée « suivre Jésus », dont la jeunesse ne veut plus, y voyant une mômerie vide de sens. Qui est Jésus, demande-t-elle, pourquoi devons-nous le suivre et qu'en résultera-t-il ?

Suivre Jésus, c'est croire en Lui absolument, trouver Dieu en Lui, un Dieu qui pardonne et fait de nous ses enfants en un sens nouveau et créateur. C'est devenir les instruments fidèles des desseins rédemp-

teurs qui se sont révélés dans sa Personne, ses enseignements, sa mort et sa résurrection.

Suivre Jésus, c'est nous consacrer aux intérêts pour lesquels Il est mort sur la Croix. C'est placer au centre de notre vie Dieu et ses desseins tels qu'ils se sont révélés en Jésus. C'est accepter, en toute occasion, de dépasser le premier mille du devoir pour faire le deuxième mille du sacrifice chrétien. C'est selon les propres paroles du Christ, prendre chaque jour notre croix et le suivre.

Jamais, en aucun temps, il n'y a eu appel plus urgent à être vraiment et entièrement chrétiens. Tout en reconnaissant pleinement qu'aucun progrès spirituel permanent n'est possible tant que l'homme lui-même ne sera pas transformé et que Dieu seul peut le transformer, nous considérons que c'est le devoir sacré de chaque chrétien d'appliquer l'enseignement de Jésus-Christ dans le domaine des affaires, de la littérature, de la politique et de l'Eglise.

Suivre Jésus, c'est résoudre le problème le plus difficile de la vie et de la religion, celui de la puissance. Par la fidélité absolue à sa Personne, nous ouvrons notre vie à l'influence créatrice de l'Esprit de Dieu, qui est aussi celui du Christ ; nous devenons coopérateurs de Dieu et Il nous guide dans la voie nouvelle du service que notre temps exige de nous.

Interpréter ainsi le Christ et le rôle de disciple du Christ c'est arriver à l'inévitable conclusion que, dans les circonstances présentes, la mission suprême d'une œuvre de jeunesse est de mettre celle-ci en présence du Dieu vivant et de ses desseins sur l'homme et la société. Appelons-là à un service dangereux et héroïque, sous la conduite de Dieu Lui-même, Car nous servirons l'humanité dans la mesure où nous l'amènerons à servir Dieu.

The Values and Weaknesses of Theism¹. (Especially in Relation to Humanism)

Henry P. Van DUSEN

Our first task is to make certain that we understand one another in our use of the word Theism. In particular, we shall have to be clear at the very outset whether we mean by Theism all belief in a living, objective God as it has been

¹ A paper read before the New York City branch of the Religious Education Association, May 10, 1930.

held at varying periods and by all types of people ; or the rough and ready Theism which wins the allegiance of the uneducated, the great mass of folk ; or Theism as it is held by intelligent men and women who mean to be as honest, as objective and as courageous in their view of Ultimate Reality as they may. Since it is the last-named only which could make any strong appeal to those like ourselves who do seek to be as intelligent as possible in their convictions, it seems to me that it would be well if we confined our attention entirely to Theism of this latter type — and to a corresponding interpretation of Humanism ; i.e., the two views in their highest and ablest expression. At all events, it is Theism in this sense only of which I shall try to speak.

I.

Three characteristics of such a Theism may be suggested at once :

a. *It means to be thoroughly scientific in spirit.* By that, I mean it proposes to draw the material for its convictions from no esoteric sources or mysterious revelations but from the warp and woof of human knowledge and experience ; it insists upon subjecting its beliefs to as rigorous as possible criticism and examination ; it intends to hold as conviction only such ideas as can be given adequate intellectual support.

I say, it means to be thoroughly scientific in spirit — not to base itself solely upon the findings of the special sciences nor to employ only the techniques of discovery of the special sciences that to which the name “ scientific method ” is sometimes given. For Theism discovers that the much-used term “ scientific method ” is employed in at least three meanings :

- 1) The distinctive but familiar laboratory methodology of the older sciences — analysis, description, classification, generalisation — the *specific technique of science*.
- 2) The scientific insistence upon accepting for belief only what comes from experience and can be tested in experience — what more properly might be termed the “ empirical ” or “ *experimental method* ”.

- 3) The scientific tendency toward unbelief ; toward a critical, sceptical temper of mind, with its " demand that nothing be accepted as true unless it has met the test of universal social verification. " The *scientific temper of mind*, or the scientific outlook.

Much confusion has arisen from failure clearly to distinguish these contrasted uses of the term " scientific method ". So otherwise clear and helpful a thinker as Professor Wieman falls clearly under this condemnation. Theism places itself fully within the scientific spirit in the second sense — loyalty to the empirical method, to deriving the materials of its conviction solely from experience and testing them in conviction.

But for the material for its convictions, Theism looks not alone to the findings of the individual sciences nor to data which can be tested through the specific scientific technique. Its source-material is drawn as well from intuition, appreciation and the whole gamut of the value-experience of man which plays such a predominant part in his interests and concerns. Theism has regard to the insights of intuition. But it attaches no magical or unique importance to these findings. They, like the conclusions of the sciences, must be subjected to the rigid testing of reasonableness, coherence, etc. If they are found to be more significant than the data of the scientific laboratory, it is not because of a peculiar authority attaching to their source, but because they deal with more intrinsically significant aspects of Reality.

b. *Such Theism is as free in spirit and as honest of mind as it is possible for fallible mortals to be.* Its beliefs can on no account be explained solely in terms of superstition or the desire for escape from reality, for protection, for reassurance, or in terms of projection or wishful thinking. It is quite conscious of the menace to sound thinking from all these sources ; its awareness enables it to safeguard itself as far as possible from the enemies of honest thought. It holds its convictions, if at all, because its mind believes them to be — never a wholly satisfying or complete interpretation of experience, but the best it can discover.

If I may be permitted a very personal illustration — during my early years in college, a lad with less interest in religion could hardly have been discovered. I felt not the slightest personal need for it and the representations of religion through the Church made not the slightest appeal. Religion was an almost completely inoperative factor in my life. Like most sophomores, I should have listed myself an agnostic for I certainly could not accept the orthodox affirmations of the church as I then understood them. But, though religion and belief in God played absolutely no part in my experience, there was no time during those years when, had I been asked to express a judgment as to whether it was likely that there was a God or not, I should have hesitated to reply, "Yes".

Such objectivity for its religious convictions Theism claims. It recognises the value of belief in God and desires to hold such belief if it may ; but under no circumstances will it do so unless on adequate intellectual grounds.

c. Such Theism, especially in respect to its intellectual honesty, is no product of our modern age ; it *stands in a long historic succession*. Our keen insight into the influence of desires upon conviction sometimes leads us to feel that no earlier generation was equipped for the genuinely honest quest for truth. We quite mistake both the ability and the honesty of our forerunners. The scientific pursuit of truth was not initiated with the Nineteenth Century. We stand in the intellectual lineage of Socrates whom someone has described as one "whose warm heart was passionately devoted to the task of keeping his head cool". And of a noble line of men who have rejoiced that they could believe in God, but who were determined that they would hold such belief only if convinced of its truth, and who have known intense strain and heat of spirit until their minds led them to such belief.

Because of this consciousness of the lineage in which it stands, Theism is not over-impressed with the "newness" of the contemporary issue raised by Humanism. Historic perspective indicates that theistic belief has never been held in an age of high intelligence except against and, in some sense,

in reaction to a materialistic, a deterministic or a humanistic philosophy. Theism recalls that the first great theistic system was wrought out in direct antithesis to the most powerful and thoroughgoing materialism of all time ; and that the Christian view of God was formulated in an intellectual atmosphere dominated by a high Stoicism whose basic premises were not essentially different from those of present-day Humanism. Our issue is not new. This fact does not lessen the intrinsic merit of the challenge to Theism, for the anti-theistic case has always been persuasive ; it does remove from it the quite unmerited glamour of a criticism which men have never confronted before.

II.

Theism, briefly defined, is the belief that the Ultimate Reality is a Living, Objective Cosmic Spirit who may be thought of as the ultimate ground of the order of Nature and the supporter and confirmer of human values ; whose Purposes may be discovered through the trend in cosmic evolution ; who is the common ground of that which is and that *which should be* and, consequently, justifies the hope that that which should be is realisable in the actual world ; with whom men, by sharing these purposes, may know fellowship.

The implications and values of Theism in contrast to Humanism may be suggested through a brief survey of three of its beliefs — its view of Nature ; its view of man ; its view of God.

a. *Nature*

Theism discovers God through Nature, but it does not rest its argument either for the fact of God or the nature of God upon Nature. Theism finds Nature to be a genuine revelation of God ; it does not find it demonstrating the Providence of God.

In its account of Nature, Theism follows the best of contemporary scientific interpretation, quite probably the account of Creative or Emergent Evolution. Against the older and cruder Naturalism, Nature is seen to be not all of

a piece, but a process of development appearing in well-marked gradations or levels. There is no break in continuity of process in the story of evolution from electron to saint ; but the levels indicate genuine and rather clearly defined gradations. "Continuity of process and the emergence of real differences — these are the twin aspects of the cosmic history."

The more obvious and familiar characteristics of Nature are — its incomprehensible immensities, its inconceivable minutenesses, its orderliness, its intelligibility, its development, its progress. Theism, with all science, accepts unquestioningly two frequently unrecognised assumptions regarding Nature — its conformity to law through and through and its essential intelligibility to the human mind — assumptions which Theism is inclined to think would, alone, imply a Cosmic Power, God, did we but recognise and accept their implications. With Professor Mather of Harvard, it is inclined to say :

" That there is an Administration of the Universe cannot be denied. Something has determined and continues to determine the functioning of natural law, the orderly transformations of matter and energy. From one point of view the question " Is there a God ? " is promptly and finally answered in the affirmative. But that is not the real question at issue. Man wants to know the character of this Administration of the Universe which he is obliged to accept whether it pleases him or not. He yearns to discover the true nature of that determining Something. The real question is, " What sort of God is it which rules this world ? "

It is this fact which gives Theism its incurable intellectual dissatisfaction with any mere agnosticism.

But the more important aspect of Nature from the point of view of a philosophy of reality is the character of the developing cosmic process. Ours is a Universe whose ultimate structure has given birth to and continuously supports the world of inanimate things, the material Universe ; whose inanimate structure has given birth to animate life ; whose animate life has given birth to man and the things of the Spirit.

It is a great world-process — a process of which the highest products, so far as we can judge through our limited knowledge, are human souls at their best. If there be a Power or Being behind it, the intent of that Power seems revealed through the slow cosmic drift upwards, a development which is a scientific empirical fact quite independent of man's apprehension or man's co-operation.

The climax of that cosmic process, upon our planet, is discovered in a capacity which distinguishes men when they rise to their best, the capacity to recognise, to love and to serve immaterial and intangible realities to which we give the name values — truth, generosity, love, courage, beauty, goodness. Values, then, upon whose reality and significance most modern theistic theories have rested their case exclusively do not represent a wholly different order of reality from the facts of physics and biology with which science has been so largely preoccupied ; they are organic to the world of Nature. Facts and values are aspects of one cosmic process. Values stand as at once the culmination and the meaning of the whole cosmic scheme ; it appears as though it were to issue in them that all the rest exists. The sum of the matter is — that the world of Nature with which the natural sciences are primarily concerned exists for and issues in and is therefore organic to delicate and intangible but supremely significant realities of which technical science is no longer able to furnish an adequate account. It is a Kingdom of values which is the destiny of the whole. It seems reasonable that it is here at the top rather than at the bottom, in the climax rather than in the beginnings, that there should be expected clearest light on whatever Power or Being or Reality might be discovered behind the whole. Our most important light on God would be expected in the experience of values incarnate in human personality at its best.

The conception of God which Theism finds suggested by a study of Nature is of a Cosmic Mind purposing good who is the Creator of a steadily progressing world process which finds its culmination in the creation of free, intelligent, moral

creators whom He invites to join Him in the further creation of a more ideal world.

Such, Theism believes to be a fair empirical rendering of the facts of Nature revealed by Science. But it is not to be thought that Nature alone justifies full theistic belief. Nor must it be suggested for one moment that Nature itself reveals Divine Providence or the full Divine Purpose. There is a great drift toward progress in Nature which justifies the assumption of Mind and Will and Purpose behind it ; but Nature is not the nurse-maid of the individual nor the guardian of his specific needs and values. Theism wishes to be very clear at that point.

“ Nature on the large scale of history may be regarded as the instrument of man’s moral and intellectual education ; but that does not mean that we are bound to take each of nature’s happenings as the exponent of a particular moral purpose. Contingency is written across the face of Nature... Just such a world is better fitted to be a nurse of what is greatest in human character than any carefully adjusted scheme of moral discipline.” A. S. Pringle Pattison, *The Idea of God*.

“ Are we justified in saying that the imperfect and puzzling world that surrounds us is an unfit medium for the moral life — if by the moral life we mean the triumph of the spirit — or that it makes impossible the adoption of an ethical point of view in interpreting reality ? ” W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*.

b. *Human Nature: Man*

It would be difficult to say whether Humanism or Theism were the more optimistic or pessimistic regarding human nature. Almost all shades of opinion are to be discovered within each position. Humanism at this point presents a strange paradox ; at no point is its logical inconsistency quite so great. Its debtors to Naturalism and to the interpretation of personality through the new Psychology, Freudian and otherwise, often leads it to an exceedingly disheartening estimate of man’s freedom and capacity. But

wedded to this pessimism is frequently, one might almost say usually, a quite extraordinary Romanticism about the essential goodness and potentialities of the individual.

Theism falls under something of the same condemnation. Fundamentally, its view of human nature is dualistic and, therefore, at first glance, pessimistic ; but Theism, too, to a considerable degree is the child of the Romantic Movement and this incurable romanticism has found encouragement in the high estimate of the *ultimate* capacities of the human spirit which is central in Christianity, tracing itself to the thought of Jesus Himself. An uncritical and unintelligent Theism has accepted the Christian view of the ultimate destiny of man, while quite overlooking Christianity's conviction of the way by which that destiny is to be achieved.

The high significance which Theism attaches to human nature in its highest achievement cannot possibly be exaggerated. Indeed, so fundamental is this that Christian Theism at least finds in human personality at its best the most adequate insight into the nature of Reality itself. That is the meaning of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. It is its conviction that through human life at its best, it is possible to know more of the ultimate truths of our world than in any other way. Christianity is an appeal to human life at its best against every other source of knowledge, every other evidence. Logically, that is not always convincing ; it has never been so — “ nonsense to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews ”. But that is the contention of Christianity, none the less an argument in terms of the evidence of life. Against a natural order which often and in many of its aspects appears cruel, utterly callous to all that man holds most dear. Christianity points to human life at its best and says, “ I trust the evidence of *this* rather than *that* ”. It is Christianity's final claim that, truer than the ablest formulae of the scientists, the profoundest speculations of the philosophers is the pragmatic evidence of the fullest life. It is for this reason that it attaches supreme significance to the best life it knows.

But all this concerns human life *at its best*. Concerning original human nature, Theism's view is different. Indeed

there is not a little support for the contention that it is at precisely this point — in one's view of human nature, rather than in one's interpretation of ultimate reality ; in one's psychology rather than in one's metaphysics — that the crucial intellectual and practical issue of our day is to be found ; the fundamental divergence between Humanism and Theism.

Humanism, following Naturalism on the one hand and Romanticism on the other, is fundamentally monistic in its interpretation of personality ; Theism is characteristically dualistic. Of course, I do not suggest the crude dualism of much traditional theology. But it is the conviction of Theism, none the less, that original human nature is not in itself good. It cannot be expected to develop spontaneously and inevitably to the stature of full manhood if left to its natural course. It requires to be trained, disciplined, reborn, transformed. Whether one have in view the sharper dualism of Paul with his warfare of flesh and spirit, or the gentler but no less clear dualism of Jesus with His "except ye be born again " and " he who would save his life must lose it ", the testimony of Christian Theism is unanimous — original human nature requires the disciplines and resources of religious consecration and faith to realise that high potentiality which it lies in man to achieve. And — strange paradox ! — in this position Theism finds itself clearly in affiliation with Classical Humanism *against* both Naturalism and popular Religious Humanism.

c. God

The Theistic view of God has already been suggested. He is thought of as a Living, Objective Cosmic Reality. He is regarded as the ultimate ground of the order of Nature, Whose Purpose for the cosmic order can be described in the slow tedious upward drift of history ; but Nature does not reveal Him completely. He is the ground of the values which stand at the summit of cosmic evolution. He is the guarantor of the permanence of those values. His Purpose is the will to good of men which has as its ultimate end the winning of men into communion and partnership with Himself. He

is thought of as personal because it is personality standing near the climax of the creative process which furnishes the clearest and most adequate clue to His nature. He cannot be less than the best of that creation; He must be in some sense personal, and more. "If we err in speaking of God as personal, we err not that we say too much but that we say too little; and if we err in calling Him "Father", we judge that we err less grievously than if we called Him anything else". He is believed to be self-limited, by the impersonal character of the natural order and, more important, by the gift of genuine if limited freedom to men. Relationship with Him is a personal fellowship of communion and co-operation. He is best thought of as one who "stands at the door" of human life and knocks. And the relation into which He invites men is one of conscious partnership in the toil-bought building of a better world.

III.

It remains to add a brief word about the values and the weaknesses of Theism.

The Values of Theism

1. It presses man's desire for understanding through to an incomplete but satisfying conclusion. It neither begs the intellectual problem nor concludes it in agnosticism. It is not claimed that all the problems are solved; it is claimed that sufficient evidence is discovered to justify belief in the fundamental unity, purpose and goodness of life's experience, and so to release men's energies fully in the practical conquest of evil and realisation of a Kingdom of Values. From such conviction, is believed to result not merely intellectual satisfaction, but also the poise, unity, strength and optimism which assurance of the meaningfulness of existence should bring.

2. It furnishes perspective, lifting men's attention beyond a too intense preoccupation with the minutia of human concern; setting men's interests and man's destiny against larger horizons; and so guarding against foreshortened per-

spective and practical frustration and assuring greater wisdom, patience, and faith.

3. It proposes for the enlistment of man's energies a Cause greater than even his highest human concerns ; and, in the service of that Cause a sense of worth and an assurance of comradeship greater than human fellowship can afford.

4. It promises to man a completion for each of the major aspects of his life's higher outreach and for his life as a whole.

For his mind, bent upon its most difficult and honest quest for truth, seeking if it may find in Reality outside of it something to correspond to the unity and purpose which it dimly feels within its own consciousness — an *intelligence*, which give to the world its order, its dependability, its progress, which makes the world intelligible to man at all — and which guarantees that kind of an environment without which his mind must be completely baffled and his highest purposes frustrated.

For his appreciations, reaching forth for the fullest experience of beauty, the highest expression of beauty — a *realisation* greater than any human prototype or his own highest anticipations.

For his Purposes, responding to need or challenge or opportunity, and giving themselves beyond any dictate of caution or self-interest — a sense of *comradeship* in life's noblest effort and needed strength in life's struggle.

For his whole life, seeking to respond most completely to the higher ranges of appeal within it and without — a *fellowship* which distance or change or the ebb and flow of human circumstance cannot destroy.

The Weaknesses of Theism

The weaknesses of Theism are only too well known. And they are very real. For the most part, they spring from false exaggerations of certain aspects of Theistic belief ; or from exclusive emphasis upon one or the other side of what seem to be permanent paradoxes.

1. The Theistic insistence upon seeing the affairs of

life in the broadest possible perspective and against a trans-earthly background frequently leads to other worldliness and blindness to immediate social needs and tasks.

2. The theistic experience of cosmic support for weakness encourages man's inveterate longing to lean. Religion becomes a retreat instead of an enterprise; God is a refuge for escape from the unpleasant, instead of a comrade in the conquest of the unpleasant. God will do it; man lies down on the job.

3. The theistic certainty of the reality of God without precise and complete understanding of the ways of God's working gives excuse for magic, superstition and all the weird and strange aberrations which disfigure the fringes of religion's main stream.

4. But the most serious weakness of Theism is that its basic conviction is always held somewhat beyond complete and wholly satisfying proof.

There is evidence for God in the order and beauty and progress of Nature — evidence which at times seems almost incontrovertible. The Universe does point to God. But it does not point unmistakably to the God religious experience needs. And its evidence is never unqualified, never wholly convincing. Just when we are most secure, some instance of the stark cruelty or impersonality of Nature, or, more probably, some peculiarly flagrant instance of the injustice of life thrusts itself upon us. And belief is overlaid with great question marks. The evidence for God is great; it is never wholly convincing.

There is light to be discovered on the injustice and disappointments and frustration which life thrusts upon us — the instances of evil which are so difficult to understand and more difficult to endure. Sit down quietly with the facts, seek perspective, a whole view of things, and it is possible to see why many of these things must be. But the explanation is never wholly satisfying. It tells us why, in a world which is a training ground for human character, there must be the possibility of intense suffering, of rank injustice, why some must pay the price for wrongs for which

they have no responsibility. But that does not make life one bit more reasonable for this and that person who suffers. It solves the problem of the Universe but not of the individual. And, even when explanation has done its best, there remains an uncatalogued residuum to tantalise the honest mind and harry the sensitive spirit. There is light ; but no clear vision. The evidence is persuasive, but never wholly satisfying.

And, when we face the supreme mystery of existence and see one whom we value highly pass beyond this life, here, too, the evidence for the life beyond is not wanting. There is much of it. But, to the sensitive or acute mind, there are very serious difficulties. The proof is persuasive, but it is far, far from complete. At the last word, if we believe in immortality, we move out not in spite of proof, but beyond proof.

In this sense, religion is inevitably, incurably, irrational. But it is also consciously, deliberately, convincingly irrational. It believes that there are rational reasons why any true religion must of necessity be so.

Our present-day intellectualists are crying for a rational religion — a religious belief clearly deducible from the obvious facts of experience. Naïve Christianity has often claimed to furnish that. Profound religion has seldom made that claim. With regard to the facts of evil, the late Baron von Hugel once said, " Christianity does not profess to explain evil. It cannot do so. No one can do so. Christianity has done two things greater and more profound. It has immensely deepened the fact, the reality, the awful potency of sorrow and pain. And it has immensely increased man's capacity to utilise and transform evil. It has given to souls the faith and strength to grasp life's nettle. "

Religion makes no claims for the obvious rationality of life. It faces frankly life's apparent irrationality ; or, at least, the apparent impartial indifference of the Universe to the soul's deepest moral concerns. It appeals from an apparent irrationality to what it conceived to be a higher though less obvious rationality — an order of things which must appear irrational in order that character may be self-

achieved and faith genuine. It appeals to its insight that a truly moral world must be so.

For a world which meted out even-handed justice would be a world in which virtue and prudence would be identical ; and, therefore, a world unsuited for the achievement of character. A world in which God stood at the street-corners of life as obvious as the nose on one's face would be a world in which religious belief would be equivalent to worldly wisdom ; therefore, a world ill-suited for the making of true religion. To that degree, our world must be irrational.

Ours is a world in which thorough assurance of its reasonableness is possible only for those who strive to prove it reasonable ; only in the living experience of that attempt. Ours is the kind of world in which vital religion is achieved only through faith. And, if at times, our passion for realism, our logical faculties, raise protest against the apparent unreasonableness of such a world, they are silenced by the central temper of our spirits which recognise that it is in precisely such a world that we would choose to live. Only in such a world can courage achieve character and faith make belief secure.

Theism is, therefore, in the last analysis through and through pragmatic. For what final evidence can we accept as to the ultimate goodness of the Universe ? What is an adequate test ? Surely, what it does to those whom we recognise as its noblest spirits. To believe in the goodness of God and His world, we do not require to believe in a natural order which metes out even-measured justice to all men. We require to believe in a world where the noblest men can achieve freedom and triumph of spirit over all even-handed justice and nice rewards. We need to discover a world where the bravest souls win the noblest character — and the deepest realisation within their own consciousness of the victory over life. Such a world ours is. Theism is intuitive in its origin, rational and empirical in its development, — pragmatic in its final verification.

Foi au Dieu personnel et Vie chrétienne

Charles WESTPHAL

Ce qu'il y a de plus original peut-être dans la révélation judéo-chrétienne, c'est l'importance qu'on y trouve attachée à l'affirmation du Dieu personnel, si proche de chaque créature. D'autres religions ont apporté de hautes sagesse, mis en lumière certaines nuances de la vérité, annoncé la justice, pressenti l'amour, préfiguré la rédemption. Mais aucune, semble-t-il, n'a proposé à la foi un Dieu dont la relation avec le fidèle ait un pareil caractère d'intimité personnelle, tant de familiarité avec tant de grandeur. Qu'on se rappelle l'intercession d'Abraham, cet étonnant dialogue qui commence par une sorte de défi : « Feras-tu mourir le juste avec le méchant ? Non, tu ne le feras pas ! » et s'achève par ce timide balbutiement : « Que mon Seigneur ne se fâche pas si je parle encore une fois... » ; le mystérieux combat de Jacob : « Je ne te laisserai point aller... » ; le pathétique entretien de Moïse avec le Dieu du buisson ardent, qui répond patiemment aux objections renouvelées, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin « sa colère s'embrase contre Moïse » ; les débats intérieurs de Jérémie, aux prises avec les cruelles exigences d'une vocation tragique : « Tu m'as trompé, ô Eternel, et je me suis laissé tromper... », et s'écriant un autre jour, triomphant contre toute apparence : « L'Eternel est avec moi comme un héros puissant ! » ; l'humble Amos déclarant fièrement à la face du sacrificateur qui veut l'expulser du sanctuaire royal : « L'Eternel m'a pris derrière mon troupeau ! » En vérité, on pourrait multiplier les exemples. L'histoire d'Israël ne prend toute sa signification religieuse qu'à la lumière de l'action personnelle de ce Dieu qui appelle, guide, avertit, punit, relève, suscite l'homme qu'il faut, révèle au peuple ce qu'il peut comprendre de sa volonté ou de sa loi, montre toute la patience de l'amour et toute la persévérance de la sainteté. Et qu'est-ce que le don de Christ, au terme de cette histoire, sinon l'acte suprême du Dieu que son insondable pédagogie a conduit à s'incarner — c'est-à-dire à se rendre

personnellement visible aux hommes ? « Moi et le Père, nous sommes un » dira Jésus. Et ce mot de Père, enfin, par lequel il nous donne à jamais la plus haute image de Dieu, caractérise non pas simplement un amour théorique de protection, mais la plus attentive vigilance, la plus directe sollicitude : « Votre Père sait de quoi vous avez besoin » ; « ton Père, qui voit dans le secret... » Jésus lui-même, en qui nous connaissons non seulement Dieu mais nous-mêmes selon Pascal, nous donne, en tant qu'homme, l'exemple d'une vie où Dieu intervient sans cesse et souverainement, et qui trouve sa grandeur et son autorité dans sa dépendance même : « Je ne suis pas seul ; le Père est avec moi... Je ne fais rien de moi-même... Je ne suis pas venu de moi-même... » C'est pourquoi la piété chrétienne repose inébranlablement sur la foi au Dieu personnel, foi que confirment ensemble la doctrine, l'histoire et l'expérience. C'est ce Dieu qui apparaît à Pascal, la nuit mémorable du 23 novembre 1654 : « Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob, non des philosophes et des savants... Dieu de Jésus-Christ. »

Pour persuader le monde de l'existence de Dieu, l'argument voltairien de l'horloger est de peu de poids, mais combien m'apparaît dans la logique du Christianisme le geste un peu fou de ce vénérable évangéliste qui se promenait par les rues de Lyon, portant à sa boutonnière un énorme insigne où le passant, surpris lisait ces mots : DIEU TE CHERCHE ! Non pas une entité métaphysique, mais un Dieu vivant qui se penche sur chaque créature, voilà le Dieu des chrétiens. « Ce qui fait une mentalité religieuse, écrivait Jacques Rivière dans son journal de captivité, ce qui la domine et lui donne sa forme, c'est l'idée de personne, c'est la connaissance, la considération, la vision perpétuelle d'un être vivant et personnel, de Dieu. Au contraire, ce qui fait une mentalité philosophique, c'est l'idée d'universalité, la notion de quelque chose de commun, de pareil, de tiré à *n* exemplaires (Kant). » Et il ajoute très justement : « Ainsi la conduite d'un être religieux, même lorsqu'elle lui ressemble par les actes, diffère *dans sa racine* de la conduite de celui qui ne l'est pas. » La foi au Dieu personnel, en effet, détermine d'une manière toute particulière la conduite du chrétien, et

donne à sa vie intérieure et à sa piété leur tonalité, leur énergie originales.

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C'est d'abord notre *connaissance* même de Dieu qui est déterminée par notre foi. Je n'entends pas ici poser le problème de la connaissance religieuse en général, mais seulement constater que pour le chrétien il s'agit ici non pas d'une connaissance spéculative, mais d'une relation de personne à personne. Le chrétien ne connaît pas Dieu, il le *reconnait*. « Nous sommes conviés, dit Calvin, à une connaissance de Dieu, non pas telle que plusieurs l'imaginent, à savoir qui voltige seulement au cerveau en spéculant, mais laquelle ait une droite fermeté et produise son fruit, voire quand elle est dûment comprise de nous et enracinée au cœur. Car Dieu nous est manifesté par ses vertus, desquelles quand nous sentons la force et vigueur en nous, et jouissons des biens qui en proviennent, c'est bien raison que nous soyons touchés beaucoup plus au vif d'une telle appréhension, qu'en imaginant un Dieu éloigné de nous, et lequel ne se fit point sentir par effet. Dont aussi nous avons à recueillir que la droite voie de chercher Dieu, et le meilleur ordre que nous puissions tenir est, non pas de nous fourrer avec une curiosité trop hardie à éplucher sa majesté, laquelle nous devons plutôt adorer que sonder trop curieusement : mais de le contempler en ses œuvres, par lesquelles il se rend prochain et familier à nous, et par manière de dire se communique ». Le chrétien reconnaît l'action de Dieu hors de lui et en lui, il se sent au bénéfice de cette action, bien plus *il se sent connu* par le Dieu qui agit, appelé par lui à une relation personnelle avec lui. Déjà Israël attachait une importance extraordinaire au nom, non seulement à celui de Dieu qui est une sorte d'incarnation de sa personne, mais à celui de l'homme : « Je t'ai appelé par ton nom, je t'ai choisi quand tu ne me connaissais pas... » Et Jésus dit du Bon Berger : « Il appelle ses brebis par leur nom... elles le suivent parce qu'elles connaissent sa voix. » Connaître Dieu, c'est donc d'abord se sentir connu, nommé, appelé par lui ; et pour le connaître davantage, il faudra s'y

prendre comme pour connaître une personne : il faudra aimer, et parce qu'il est « le nom qui est au-dessus de tout nom » : obéir. « On le connaît, écrit le P. Charles, dans la mesure où on lui appartient ; aussi la vie éternelle, qui consiste à le connaître, consiste tout autant à être possédé par lui — consortium Jesu Christi —. Ceux qui veulent lui rester tout à fait étrangers se condamnent eux-mêmes à divaguer quand ils parlent de lui. » L'amour et l'obéissance sont seuls révélateurs de la plénitude de Dieu — plénitude pour l'âme, si elle reste un mystère pour l'esprit, en attendant le jour où « je connaîtrai comme j'ai été connu. »

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En second lieu, la foi au Dieu personnel donne à la *prière* chrétienne son véritable caractère. Elle n'est ni le prosternement de l'être qu'accable ou qu'exalte une force cosmique, ni l'exercice spirituel considéré comme une hygiène mentale, quand il n'est pas une simple gymnastique auto-suggestive. Elle est le drame d'un face à face. (J'entends drame au sens antique, comme une action qui n'est pas nécessairement tragique). Certes nous avons à nous préparer aux entrevues que Dieu nous propose ! mais peut-être la prière vraie ne commence-t-elle qu'au moment où Dieu lui-même prend la direction du débat. J'ai cité déjà quelques exemples bibliques, aussi grandioses que réalistes. La tradition chrétienne est riche de témoignages qui nous invitent à respecter l'initiative de Dieu. « En toute oraison, dit Calvin, il nous faut soigneusement garder de vouloir assujettir ni lier Dieu à aucunes certaines circonstances ; ni lui déterminer, constituer ou limiter ni temps, ni lieu, ni façons ou manières de faire ou d'accomplir ce que nous lui requérons. Ainsi nous apprendrons de persévérer en oraison, et d'attendre en patience le Seigneur, en différant nos désirs à l'heure de sa volonté. » Conseil admirable, qui revient à mainte page de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ : « Vous devez soumettre entièrement vos désirs à ma volonté, ne point vous aimer vous-mêmes, et ne rechercher en tout que ce qui me plaît. Souvent vos désirs s'enflamment, et vous emportent impétueusement ; mais

considérez si cette ardeur a ma gloire pour motif ou votre intérêt propre. Si c'est moi que vous avez en vue, vous serez content, quoi que j'ordonne... » C'est bien ce que pratiquait l'humble frère Laurent, qui vivait tellement en présence de Dieu que les exercices, les formulations de la prière lui paraissaient inutiles, presque dangereux. Si facilement l'homme se cherche, se contemple, s'écoute lui-même — et s'abuse, attribuant avec une satisfaction ambiguë à l'inspiration divine ce qui n'est qu'aisance oratoire. « Je ne vous conseille pas, écrivait le Frère Laurent, de beaucoup discourir en l'oraison, les longs discours étant souvent des occasions d'égarement ; tenez-vous y devant Dieu comme un pauvre muet et un paralytique à la porte d'un riche, occupez-vous à tenir votre esprit en la présence du Seigneur. »

Si l'attitude de la prière est cette docilité attentive de l'esprit, cette soumission de la volonté à une volonté souveraine, cette contemplation ineffable du Dieu vivant et personnel dont l'amour irradie en Jésus-Christ, alors la grâce de la prière sera, quelle que soit la forme que prendra l'exaucement, d'éprouver toute la réalité du mystérieux entretien et d'entendre le Dieu que l'on écoute. « Heureuse l'âme qui entend le Seigneur lui parler intérieurement » (Imitation de J.C.). Heureux le croyant qui, comme Pascal, méditant l'Evangile, contemple le Sauveur avec si grande ferveur d'obéissance et d'amour que son cœur bat au rythme de l'agonie de Gethsémané : dans cette heure sainte, une voix surnaturelle s'élève, et c'est le dialogue sublime du Mystère de Jésus : « Laisse-toi conduire à mes règles... C'est mon affaire que ta conversion... Je te suis présent... Je te suis plus un ami que tel ou tel... »

— Seigneur, je vous donne tout.

— Je t'aime plus ardemment que tu n'as aimé tes souillures... »

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Dans le domaine *moral*, la foi au Dieu personnel a aussi des conséquences singulières pour la piété. La repentance chrétienne est toute différente de la honte et du remords de

l'homme qui ne se sent jugé que par sa conscience — que par lui-même — et qui ne se sent responsable qu'en face d'une société régie par une loi qu'elle s'est donnée. « Nous surtout, intellectuels, disait récemment Robert Garric, nous avons tant de replis... » oui, si nous ne sommes comptables qu'au regard d'une loi. Mais Pierre, renégat, n'avait plus de replis quand Jésus, chargé de chaînes et traversant la cour du grand prêtre, posait sur lui son regard si clairvoyant et si triste. Le chrétien qui vit en relation personnelle avec Dieu se sent responsable devant lui, jugé par lui sans aucune fraude possible, et pourtant c'est un ami qui le juge. Paul Claudel exprime admirablement cette situation paradoxale :

*« Tu m'as vaincu, mon bien-aimé ! Mon ennemi,
Tu m'as pris dans les mains mes armes une à une,
Et maintenant, je n'ai plus de défense aucune,
Et voici que je suis un devant vous, Ami !*

*Ni le jeune désir, ni la Raison qui ruse,
Ni la Chimère ainsi qu'un cheval ébloui,
Ne m'ont été loyaux et sûrs : tout m'a trahi !
Et ni mon lâche cœur ne m'a servi d'excuse.*

*J'ai fui en vain ; partout j'ai retrouvé la Loi.
Il faut céder enfin ! ô porte, il faut admettre
L'hôte ; cœur frémissant, il faut subir le maître,
Quelqu'un qui soit en moi plus moi-même que moi. »*

Situation paradoxale, en vérité : le plus implacable jugement, et c'est pourquoi le chrétien connaît l'humiliation radicale et toute l'horreur du péché — et en même temps le plus grand amour : alors s'ajoute à la honte une affreuse tristesse, une sorte de douleur amoureuse que donne le sentiment de l'offense personnelle, de l'ingratitude, de la trahison, en un mot le cruel tourment de faire souffrir Dieu ; mais ce n'est pas tout : cette tristesse est cependant sans désespoir, parce que cet amour divin qui souffre — et parce qu'il souffre — contient toutes les promesses et les gages de l'ineffable pardon.

Le pharisien qui prie sur la place publique n'écoute que

lui, se contemple et s'étale devant les hommes. Le péager ne voit que Dieu, et tremble, et souffre — et s'en va pardonné. Toute l'expérience morale du chrétien nous est là contée par Jésus dans un raccourci saisissant.

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A la vérité, l'expérience chrétienne tout entière n'est intelligible qu'à la lumière de la foi au Dieu personnel. Il serait intéressant de montrer comment cette foi éclaire l'insoluble problème de la souffrance, et tout ce qu'apporte au croyant dans le deuil la communion de souffrance qu'il trouve en Dieu : en arrivant auprès des sœurs de Lazare, avant toute parole, « Jésus pleura ». Il faudrait montrer aussi comment la foi est en nous, pour reprendre une expression de M. Leroy, « inspiration personnalisante ». Il faudrait encore étudier à ce point de vue le problème de la mission chrétienne, qui consiste moins à propager un enseignement qu'à envoyer à travers le monde, selon la magnifique expression de St-Paul, des « ambassadeurs de Christ ». Je ne voudrais plus insister que sur une des conséquences les plus remarquables de cette relation de personne à personne qui nous unit à Dieu : par elle c'est la *réalité de la Providence* qui nous est donnée. La Providence ! vieux mot sous lequel on n'a trop souvent imaginé qu'une vague bienveillance, un lâche secours pour les imprévoyants. Mot splendide au contraire pour le croyant qui voit agir un Dieu qui *pourvoit*. « Toutes choses concourent au bien de ceux qui l'aiment », lisons-nous dans l'épître aux Romains. Expression confuse, qui encourage les malentendus. Mais voici le sens que propose pour ce texte la récente « Bible du centenaire » : « en toutes choses, Dieu collabore au bien de ceux qui l'aiment ». C'est la formule même de la Providence chrétienne. Cette certitude est le couronnement de la foi, la forme pratique de l'assurance du salut. L'Evangile en contient la promesse, le Christ vivant en est le gage. Reprenons l'émouvant dialogue de l'Imitation de Jésus-Christ :

Le disciple. — Que vous êtes bon, mon Dieu : Peut-il y avoir une conduite plus claire que la vôtre avec moi ?

Je sais bien qu'un autre ne peut pas voir du dehors ce soin que vous prenez de moi. Mais moi, si mes yeux y restaient fermés, quelle ingratitude, quel crime !

Jésus-Christ. — Mon fils, laissez-moi agir avec vous comme il me plaît ; car je sais ce qui vous est bon. Vos pensées sont celles de l'homme, et vos sentiments sont en beaucoup de choses conformes aux penchants de son cœur.

— Il est vrai, Seigneur : vous prenez de moi beaucoup plus de soin que je n'en puis prendre moi-même.

... Si vous me laissez à moi-même, que suis-je ? Rien qu'infirmité ; mais dès que vous jetez un regard sur moi, à l'instant je deviens fort et je suis rempli d'une joie nouvelle. Et certes cela me confond que vous me releviez ainsi tout d'un coup, et me preniez avec tant de bonté en vos bras, moi toujours entraîné par mon propre poids vers la terre. C'est votre amour qui opère cette merveille, qui me prévient gratuitement, qui ne se lasse point de me secourir... O Dieu plein de tendresse, vous faites pour moi beaucoup plus que je ne mérite, et plus que je n'oserais espérer ou demander. »

Veut-on un témoignage plus récent ? Peu d'hommes ont senti réelle et proche cette Providence de Dieu, autant que Jacques Rivière durant sa captivité : « Qu'il est bon d'être avec Dieu ! Quel ami dans cette solitude... Si je n'avais d'autre promesse que celle du raisonnement, je ne me soutiendrais plus un instant. » Ses carnets sont pleins de louange et de contemplation — et quel contraste avec la vie extérieure qu'il avait à mener ! « Ces coups d'adresse de Dieu, écrit-il un jour, avec une délicieuse familiarité, ces tours qu'il nous joue, cette façon qu'il a de se servir si légèrement et magistralement de nos actes pour composer notre destinée... » Un autre jour il parle de « l'ingéniosité » de Dieu, et ajoute : « Je le vois m'aimer dans tout ce qu'il entreprend sur moi... Il faut être déjà chrétien pour comprendre combien Dieu peut se faire aimer en vous faisant souffrir... »

Ainsi, dans les vieilles pages de l'Imitation comme dans ces notes si modernes de Rivière, une même expérience vit, qui est l'expérience fondamentale de la vie chrétienne : Dieu a pour chaque être un dessein personnel, exerce dans chaque vie une action personnelle, dessein parfois caché, action

parfois contrariée, mais la sécurité du croyant est de se sentir ainsi connu, voulu, agi et guidé par son Dieu. Plus le croyant avance dans la vie spirituelle, plus l'intimité divine devient vivante et pressante. Jésus-Christ, qui a vécu l'union totale avec Dieu, est pour le chrétien le médiateur de cette intimité, et la forme achevée de l'expérience chrétienne est celle qui faisait dire à St-Paul : « Ce n'est plus moi qui vis, c'est Christ qui vit en moi. »

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Il est impossible de conclure sans évoquer aussi la troisième personne de la Trinité. N'est-ce point par le St-Esprit que le Dieu de Jésus-Christ nous devient parfaitement intérieur ? Le miracle de la Pentecôte, qu'est-ce d'autre que notre relation avec Dieu confirmée, transfigurée, vivante à jamais ? Je crois en Dieu, Père, Fils et St-Esprit, une seule personne adorable, un seul Dieu béni éternellement.

The Meaning of Christian Theism

Walter M. HORTON

I.

Christian theism is meaningless apart from Christian ethics. That is to say, faith in the Christian God grows naturally out of faith in the Christian way of life. The latter can conceivably exist without the former, but not the former without the latter.

There are sincere seekers after truth who heartily accept the ethical teachings of Jesus, but cannot see their way clear to share his faith in God. One understands their position perfectly, and respects it ; but it is impossible to respect a man who claims to believe in the Christian God, and then

daily denies, in word and deed, all those practical consequences which irresistibly flow from that faith. It is a sad paradox that there are so many men in the Christian Church who would bristle up aggressively to meet any attack upon their faith in God, but who look with suspicion upon any attempt to apply the ethical teachings of Jesus to contemporary problems, as if that were the most dangerous form of heresy. Upon closer examination, it will be seen that the God in whom such men believe is not the God of Christian theism, but a celestial policeman whose function is to preserve the *status quo*, and protect the vested rights of the privileged classes.

Genuine Christian theism is the natural culmination of a series of adventures in faith beginning in the sheltered circle of the home, the church and the neighbourhood, stretching out through the hostile spheres of industrial, interracial and international relations, and plunging boldly at last into the dark shadows of cosmic mystery where the ultimate secret of human destiny lies hidden.

Why does a man become a Christian in the first place ? Not because of his acceptance of any formal line of argumentation, but because he has been impressed with the beauty and power of the Christian spirit, individually embodied in some parent, or friend, or pastor, and socially embodied in what we call the " atmosphere " of his family, or his community, or his church. Something within him responds ; and he finds the first evidence of the power of the Christian spirit in the harmony, joy, and sense of exhaustless resources which it creates within his own personality.

Then, almost simultaneously, he begins to get evidence of the power of Christian love to create ideal social relationships. He experiences the vast reinforcement of energy and heightening of life's significance which comes from Christian fellowship ; and relying upon these resources, he begins to try a few timid experiments in overcoming evil with good. In spite of many failures and rebuffs, he begins to believe that, wisely and skilfully practised, Christian love and forgiveness have the power to melt the hardest heart ; and it occurs to him that these principles must have some wider application

to the great world that lies outside the sphere of the neighbourhood.

If he really takes this notion seriously, he is in for a trial of faith far more severe than anything he has yet experienced ; for in the economic and political sphere he will find it taken for granted, even by many calling themselves Christians, that a Bismarckian policy of " blood and iron " is the only one that can succeed. Driven in upon himself by opposition, ridicule and failure, he will find himself reaching out for support to a larger fellowship than that of the local church — a fellowship which stretches back across the centuries and includes the great creative spirits who have faced loneliness and frustration unafraid, because they have believed that love is stronger than hate and stronger than death.

It is at this stage that fellowship with Christ and personal loyalty to Christ come to be something more than a form of words to the modern Christian. As he finds himself — somewhat to his embarrassment — marching with the little band of pioneers at whose head that colossal figure strides on, he feels his admiration and affection for his leader kindle ; and he begins to realise that there are heights of faith that he has not yet scaled ; for the leader's eyes are turned upward, and his faith is sustained by a fellowship that is more than human. Candidly, our modern Christian does not find it easy to share the faith of Jesus, for he lives in an age which regards the non-human cosmos as a mere reservoir of mechanical energies, to be scientifically studied and technically manipulated ; yet he is never nearer to sharing it than when he shares, in any measure in his leader's sufferings and disappointments. At such critical moments, when the brutishness of man and the indifference of the universe seem to bring all hope of a Kingdom of Love to the verge of absolute shipwreck, something rises within him to protest against the verdict ; and he has a sense that he is not alone. " Man's extremity is God's opportunity." It is precisely when all human aid vanishes that there arises most compellingly the conviction that a spirit like Christ's is present, and

potentially dominant, not only in the human but in the cosmic sphere as well.

II.

“Wishful thinking”! Yes, that is just what it is. Genuine theistic faith is not the product of cool impersonal scientific analysis nor calm, disinterested philosophic contemplation of the world as it is, leading to a reasonable hypothesis concerning its ultimate Ground or First Cause. That kind of thinking by itself leads not to theism, but to pantheism. It springs from Greece, and not from Palestine. Genuine ethical theism of the Hebrew-Christian type springs from an active, ardent desire to make the world better than it is. Its God is not the God of things as they are, but the God of things as they ought to be, and may be. He stands over against nature and society, not like an artisan content with his finished and perfect work (as in eighteenth century Deism) but like a teacher or a statesman, dealing with refractory material but confident of his power to make it eventually into an ideal pattern. A kind of provisional dualism is thus inevitable in the Christian view of God's relation to the world. God cannot without reservations be described as the Creator of the world as it is, or the instigator of “whatsoever comes to pass”. When Christian faith ascribes the creation of the world to God, it does so not by way of logical inference from natural phenomena, but by a daring exercise of wishful thinking, which finds in God the beginning of all things because in Him it finds the end toward which, it hopes, all things are being drawn.

Emotional, loose-knit, metaphorical thinking of this kind is severely frowned upon by many contemporary critics of traditional Christianity. In the name of scientific method — the one sure method of reaching reliable conclusions in every sphere — we are urged to put away childish fancies, and view the facts of life, not as we would like them to be, but as they really are. If we are to have a theology, we are told, let it be a scientific theology, based upon a cautious, step-by-step process of inductive reasoning from known facts to probable hypotheses, with no giddy speculations and no intuitive

leaps of faith. That there are real possibilities in such a cautious method, and real dangers in wishful thinking, it would be futile to deny. God is not merely an object of faith ; he is an object of human experience ; and as such, he can be scientifically studied and analysed. Such study and analysis ought to make it progressively more clear precisely what we mean when we say that we rely upon God as an " ally " and " moral resource " in time of need. Nevertheless I think it should be made plain that, in matters of religion, scientific method can never be cool and impersonal, as it is in the sphere of physics and chemistry. The religious experimenter must throw himself, heart and soul, into the experiment ; he must perhaps live a whole life on unproved assumptions, and appeal to posterity for the verification of his hypotheses. If he abandons his hopes whenever they run against adverse facts, and resigns himself to a drab and constricting view of reality because he fears to play the fool, he may be missing his chance to discover some pathway out of the morass of human misery which will not reveal itself to a less ardent and impetuous investigator.

It was the great service of the Hebrew prophets to mankind that they engaged in a mortal wrestling-bout with human destiny ; and throwing themselves headlong into the encounter refused to accept a negative verdict, or to desist from the struggle until their highest hopes were somehow vindicated. The faith in God which they bequeathed us is not a cool intellectual induction, but a hot emotional conviction, like faith in humanity, faith in democracy, or faith in the abolition of war. No self-respecting pacifist or democrat or humanitarian permits his faith to hang in the balance every time he opens the morning newspaper. He is convinced that what ought to be, can be ; and though he is ready to modify his programme, and even his central principles, in the light of cool reflection and scientific experimentation, his ultimate appeal is to a verification that lies far beyond the span of his own life-time. If " humanists " and other humanitarians are " wishful thinkers " in this sense, why should they criticise theists for pushing the same process of thought a step further ? Where does the danger of moral

cowardice leave off, and the danger of childish credulity begin ?

III.

“ But what, literally, does Christian theism mean ? ” our humanist friends will ask. “ Is it merely a figurative way of expressing your belief in the ultimate triumph of Christian love in human affairs ; or do you really believe in a personal God ? When you speak of God in the masculine gender, when you refer to his power and goodness, when you call him Father or Teacher or Friend, do you mean what you say, or are you using old terminology in some new and allegorical sense, dishonestly ? Do you really believe in the anthropomorphic God in whom Jesus trusted — the God who marks the sparrow’s fall, and numbers the hairs of our head ? If you do, we marvel at your naïveté, and wonder how you happen to be living in the twentieth century. If you do not, we ask you precisely what you *do* mean, and why you persist in calling yourselves Christian theists. ” These are fair questions, and I propose to answer them as honestly as I can.

If I rightly understand the faith of modern Christian theists, it consists of a hierarchy of convictions, ranging from practical certainty through varying degrees of assurance and shading off at the far end into over-beliefs and hopes. The foundation of this hierarchy of convictions is, as I have been insisting, the conviction that what we call Christian love — the spirit which is best expressed in the life, teachings and death of Jesus of Nazareth — is the best and most powerful thing in the world. It is the *best* thing in the world, and *deserves* to prevail ; this is bed-rock, with all of us. We would rather perish with Christ, if it comes to the pinch, than triumph with his enemies ; and if the God of Mussolini is the reigning despot of this universe, we are bound to be rebels and revolutionaries. But, we further believe, with an almost equal conviction, that love is not weak ; it is the strongest thing on earth. It can easily be wounded and slain ; but it conquers even in death. We are therefore led to affirm concerning Christian love what all ethical idealists implicitly

affirm concerning their own most cherished ideals ; that there is *something in the nature of things* which makes for its triumph.

What is that "something in the nature of things", and how does it "make for" the triumph of love? I think that the force of this affirmation is best conveyed by the assertion that love is the supreme moral value, and that, like all great values, it is not merely based upon human desire, but inheres in the stable structure of reality as a whole. There is a school of thought which looks upon the whole world of values and meanings as a realm of pure subjective phantasy, in which all is relative to the whim or the taste of the individual, and one man's preference is as good as another's : *de gustibus non disputandum*. Christian theists pretty universally reject this view. We recognise of course that a man's momentary desire is a factor in the determination of what is best for him to do at the moment ; but we insist that there are other factors : the whole structure of his character, the whole structure of the social order, and the whole structure of the universe. A desire which brings a man into a state of division within himself, or a state of perpetual friction with his neighbours, or which dooms him to butt his head ineffectively against the general structure of reality, is a bad desire. The nature of things "makes for" the triumph of love, because love unifies personality, creates mutually satisfactory social relationships, and brings us into a state of harmonious dependence upon and effective partnership with the whole structure and process of the universe.

This last clause demands further elaboration. What do we mean by "harmonious dependence" and "effective partnership"? Here we come to an aspect of Christian love which we have hitherto been neglecting, in our emphasis upon its ethical bearings. Christian love, as described in the New Testament, is not merely a strenuous moral attitude of good-will ; it is at the same time a serene religious attitude of dependence and trust. Professor Moffatt has shown in his book on *Love in the New Testament*, that in the experience of love as found in primitive Christianity the religious attitude

is primary and the moral attitude secondary. What this religious attitude of dependence means, in purely empirical terms, has been beautifully expressed by one who cannot possibly be accused of religious fanaticism or romanticism, Professor John Dewey :

Yet the last word is not with obligation nor with the future. Infinite relationships of man with his fellows and with nature already exist... Even in the midst of conflict, struggle and defeat a consciousness is possible of the enduring and comprehending whole.... There is a conceit fostered by perversion of religion which assimilates the universe to our personal desires ; but there is also a conceit of carrying the load of the universe from which religion liberates us. Within the flickering, inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. (*Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 330, 331.)

All religious men, Christian or non-Christian, will testify that this is an exact description of what they experience in the act of worship ; but the ultimate nature of that " whole " of which Professor Dewey speaks still remains to be defined. For theists, as distinct from pantheists, it is not the *all* ; because they are seeking to *change* the world in many of its aspects, and one does not rest for support upon that which one is seeking to dislodge. Nor is it a static, lifeless structure. We live in a growing, changing world, in which there is not only a stable structure, but a flowing process of which human history is an integral part. Looked at impersonally, through the eyes of physics and chemistry, our world seems to be the expression of grim, mechanical forces, indifferent to all our highest values ; but this is an artificial and partial view. Looked at concretely, down the long funnel of human history and cosmic evolution, the world about us is seen to be at least organic and vital. Not only the individual but the race is supported and environed in a larger Life which is responsive to need, as the body is responsive to the needs of its members. In the act of worship, we consciously

participate in this larger Life, and through it are brought into mystic fellowship with one another.

Shall we go a step further, and assert that this divine Life is purposive, intelligent, and personal? That *human* purpose, intelligence and personality are organic parts of this Life, is plain; and this means that mere vitalism is no more competent than mere mechanism to express its rich complexity; but if man's collective wisdom is the highest wisdom there is, it would seem a bit misleading to talk about the wisdom or personality of God. If God had no focalised consciousness apart from man, if He came to consciousness only in man, then one could not look to God for guidance, but only for energy. God would be like a great organism whose coordination was defective apart from human brains, or a great community lacking an administrative head. Now there is much in religious experience that makes the simile of an enfolding organism or great community seem appropriate when applied to God. The figure of the vine and the branches and the figure of the body and the members are classical in Christian literature. But I hold as an over-belief, in common with most Christian theists, the conviction that the divine organism has an intelligence of a higher-than-human order, and the divine community has a governing head. I am sustained in this conviction by the almost irresistible sense of guidance which comes to religious men whenever they make themselves most completely the organs of the divine Life — an impression confirmed when one glances over the great expanses of history and sees the effects of such lives upon the course of events.

If I am asked what such a subtle philosophical concept has in common with the loving Father or celestial King of Christian tradition, my reply is that the great religious geniuses have never been so naively anthropomorphic as is sometimes supposed. The Russian peasant who turned atheist and joined the Communists after his first ride in an aeroplane, because when he got above the clouds he looked all around and couldn't see God anywhere, is not representative of Christian thought at its best. The language of religion

is the language of poetry, but there is a literal truth beneath its symbolism which theology must try to express in more technical terms. Modern theology does not feel itself bound to reproduce precisely either the language or the thought of primitive Christianity ; but there is such profound religious insight embedded in the classic literature of our faith that one recurs, over and over again, to the very words in which it was expressed. God was not discovered yesterday ; and although we may hope that closer analysis of religious experience, coupled with the general progress of science and philosophy, may progressively enrich our knowledge of His nature, the broad outlines of the truth were sketched long ago, in the Book of Psalms, in unforgettable phraseology :

“ Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.”

“ The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want.”

Die Bedeutung des reformatorischen Glaubens für unsere Zeit

Franz SPEMANN

Es soll hier versucht werden, einiges über dieses Thema zu sagen, wie es in dem Auge eines deutschen Studenten-sekretärs erscheint. Also ich schreibe dies als deutscher Theologe und glaube, gerade dadurch Studenten und Führern unseres Weltbundes einen Dienst zu tun. Denn wir nützen einander im Weltbund am meisten, wenn eine nationale Bewegung die andere höher achtet denn sich selbst, wir aber dabei nicht versuchen, uns in eine fremde Volksart hinein zu phantasieren — weder die Anderen mit dem Sündigen unserer Eigenart zu quälen, noch ihnen unser Gutes gesetzlich aufzwingen zu wollen. Die Aelteren unter uns Kontinentalen stammen aus einer Zeit, die man mit Recht als

die des liberalen Bürgertums bezeichnet hat. Unter diesem Ausdruck verstand man nicht eine politische Ueberzeugung sondern eine Haltung der Seele, die sich bewusst abhebt von der Gläubigkeit kirchlicher Kultur, aber auch von der im eigentlichen Sinn modernen. Am besten stellt dieses Seelengefühl dar der ausgezeichnete Schriftsteller Gustav Freytag, dessen Roman "Soll und Haben" der vielgelesenste deutsche Roman des 19. Jahrhunderts gewesen ist. Tüchtig, am Gegensatz von Gut und Böse festhaltend, z.T. fein gebildet, durchaus nicht ohne weiteres spiessbürgerlich, mit einer Fülle ausgezeichnete Charaktere und reicher, mitunter glänzender Geister entbehrt doch dieses Bürgertum einer letzten Tiefe und des überweltlichen Schwunges. Mannigfaltig abgestuft, von einer trockenen freudelosen Frömmigkeit bis zur höchsten Geistigkeit reichend, war es doch darin einig, dass die Vertreter dieses Bürgertums, ob sie tüchtige Kaufleute, führende Universitätslehrer oder poetische Künstlerseelen waren, in einer eigentümlichen Spannung verharrten, zum Glauben der Apostel. So waren z.B. die tiefsinnigsten und feinsten deutschen Musiker dieses Zeitalters Johannes Brahms und Robert Franz. Sie haben sich mit dem Besten genährt, was sie finden konnten, mit Joh. Seb. Bachs Kantaten, mit dem protestantischen Choral, mit der altitalienischen Kirchenmusik und mit den Gesängen Händels, mit Volksliedern und Madrigalen, auch die Bibel lasen sie z.T. sehr fleissig. Aber zeitlebens rang in ihnen ein spröder Zweifel mit tiefem und mächtigem Gefühl und immer aufs neue schob ihnen der Rationalismus ihrer Zeit einen Querbalken vor. Ähnliches aber ist von Unzähligen ihrer Zeitgenossen zu sagen, bei denen der christliche Glaube verdriesseitigt und rational und moralistisch aufgeweicht erscheint. Luther wird im Lichte der Aufklärung oder durch Kants Philosophie gesehen. Richard Wagner und Franz Liszt, zwei durchaus geniale Naturen, gehören nicht zu diesem Bürgertum. Beide hatten Verständnis für das Geheimnisvolle und für das Ueberweltliche. Aber ein mystisch-phantastischer und damit verbunden ein undeutsch-weltmännisch äusserlicher Zug in ihrer Lebenshaltung hat viele aus unseren feinsten Familien davon abgehalten, sich durch diese zwei Musiker wieder zum

Neuen Testament führen zu lassen. Eine schwere Schädigung unserer Neuzeit. Als Rückschlag zu diesem neuzeitlichen Rationalismus steigern sich nun manche in einen phantastischen Wunderglauben hinein, der die Kehrseite des kritischen Zweifels ist, und das Urchristentum in eine phantastische und schwärmerische Beleuchtung rückt. Denn eine Menge geistvoller Männer, die in ihrer Weise sich bemühen, das Ueberweltliche im Neuen Testament ihren Zeitgenossen wieder verständlich zu machen, konnten doch dem Bürgertum nicht wirklich helfen, weil sie eben das Urchristentumschwärmerisch-phantastisch und gesetzlich-asketisch auffassten und darstellten. Fast alle neueren Darstellungen der ältesten Christen in der theologischen Forschung, in Dichtung und Theater, in frommen Romanen und Bildern stellen die Apostel und deren Gemeinden als verzückte Schwärmer dar, während der Heilige Geist wohl schwungvoll und feurig, aber sogleich ganz nüchtern macht. Gerade auf den Höhen gottgewirkter christlicher Erweckung weht eine himmlisch klare Luft voll Kraft, Reinheit und Stille. Das ist mit die tiefste religiöse Not im Abendlande, dass man in neuerer Zeit weithin das Wirken des Pfingstgeistes mit Naturrausch verwechselt, und so die christliche Frömmigkeit hin und her schwankt zwischen moralistischer Verflachung und spekulativer Umbildung und ihrem Gegenstück phantastischer Schwärmerei. Tolstoi und Franz von Assisi auf der einen Seite, Goethe und Kant auf der anderen, sind ihnen die grossen Nachfolger Jesu. Aber Tolstoi und Franz von Assisi bei all ihrer tiefen Menschlichkeit und Goethe und Kant bei all ihrer Feinheit und geistigen Grösse, bei aller schwärmerisch-religiösen und sozialen Glut, bei aller geistigen Klarheit und herrlichen Vitalität bleiben doch weit zurück hinter der heiligen Nüchternheit der Reformatoren und sind, an den Aposteln Paulus und Johannes gemessen, unklare und z.T. unreine Erscheinungen. Es sind nicht entscheidend geistesgeschichtliche Arbeiten, nicht die Ergebnisse geschichtlicher Studien, die mir das gezeigt haben, soviel ich mich auch mit Goethe und Luther beschäftigt habe, wiewohl ich als junger Mensch schon Nächte hindurch Tolstoi las, sondern jahrzehntelange, immer neu anhebende Seelenkämpfe haben mich

zu den Reformatoren geführt und führen mich immer wieder zu ihrer Art, das Neue Testament zu lesen. Ein gewisses Ringen auf Tod und Leben, das alle geschichtlichen Studien immer wieder umwirft, führen mich immer wieder neu von allen idealistischen Verzeichnungen des Neuen Testaments zu der Bibelauslegung der Reformatoren. Das geheimnisvolle des 19. Jahrhunderts ist nun das, dass gegen sein Ende die theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschels, die das liberale Bürgertum darstellte, und durch Wagners mystische Musikdramen eine verborgene Kette prophetisch gearteter Zeugen zugedeckt wurden, die als Schriftsteller von grossem Wurf alle Höhen und Tiefen mit dem weit geöffneten Auge des Christen durchmassen und in gross angelegten Entwürfen mit neuer Erfahrung und mit neuen Zungen den Christus der Apostel ihren Zeitgenossen bezeugten. Spengler hat eine Liste von Büchern aufgestellt, die er eine Philosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts nennt. Goethisch geredet ist diese Liste eine traurige atheistische Halbnacht. Von dieser Art Philosophie ist der Jünger Jesu geschieden. Wir halten uns zu den Aposteln und an das Neue Testament. Am bekanntesten in der Gegenwart ist der Däne Sören Kierkegaard geworden. Er war ein unversöhnlicher Gegner des spekulativ umgebauten Evangeliums aus der Schule Hegels.

Kierkegaard, der Prediger des Christentums der Innerlichkeit. Sein Büchlein, „Einübung im Christentum“ enthält den entscheidenden Satz „Der Beweis für die Wahrheit des Christentums ist die tiefere Nachfolge“. Aber erst dieser Satz ist epochemachend und hebt den christlichen Glauben heraus aus allen geistesgeschichtlichen Bindungen. Aber Kierkegaard steht nicht allein. 1852 erscheint von Heinrich W. Thiersch „Das apostolische Zeitalter“. Wie Quadern von weissem Marmor fügen sich die Sätze dieses gelehrten und erleuchteten Kenners der alten Kirche ineinander. Die dritte Auflage 1879 zeigt wie das Neue Testament wieder das Buch für das 20. Jahrhundert wird. 1853 schrieb Charles Kingsley „Hypatia“ in Form eines grandiosen Romans aus dem Alexandria des 5. Jahrhunderts, eine der grossen Apologien des Christentums. Jeder moderne Student sollte sie lesen. 1883 schrieb Henry Drummond, Professor der Bio-

logie in Glasgow, „Das Naturgesetz in der Geisteswelt“, ein epochemachendes Buch, in dem ein Biologe die Erfahrungen der christlichen Wiedergeburt durch die naturwissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse der Neuzeit beleuchtete. Drummond war ein unvergleichlicher Studentenführer und für Tausende ist sein Buch das Buch geworden, das ihre Seele und ihr Denken wieder mit dem Neuen Testament verband. Auch hat Drummond gegenüber Darwin als die treibende Kraft des Daseins die Liebe erkannt, eine Erkenntnis des Christen. 1884 schrieb Friedrich Zündel das Buch „Jesus“, das auf Blumhardts Erfahrungen aufbauend der liberalen Leben-Jesu-Bewegung gegenüber ganz modern und ganz biblisch Christus als Wundertäter darstellt. 1892 erschien dann von Prof. Martin Kähler der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus und durchschnitt die kritische Zersetzung des Neuen Testaments an der Wurzel. Kählers Theologie ist das methodisch Tiefste, was in der Neueren Zeit über das Verhältnis der irdischen Geschichte zum himmlischen Christus gesagt worden ist und überwindet sowohl die Leugnung der Ueberweltlichkeit Jesu als die Bestreitung und Verhüllung seiner wahren Menschheit. Kähler zeigte, dass der in der urchristlichen Gemeinde gepredigte Christus wirklich der durch Kreuz, Grab und Auferstehung vollendete geschichtliche Jesus von Nazareth ist und lehrte uns wieder die Evangelien und die Briefe der Apostel als Einheit schauen: diese theologische Erkenntnis und Kählers dogmatische Zeitfragen müssen in das englische übersetzt und von den Führern der angelsächsischen Theologen gründlich studiert werden. Viele der älteren Führer aus der deutschen Studentenbewegung sind vor 30 Jahren durch Kähler selbst Leser der Bibel geworden und Verkünder des auferstandenen Versöhnners.

Diese tiefsinnigen Bibelforscher und Apologeten des 19. Jahrhunderts hatten die Gabe der Erweckung und Belehrung. Und als solche wirken sie immer wieder segensreich, auch bei mir; aber die letzte Lösung der entscheidenden Not meiner Seele habe ich doch bei keinem von ihnen gefunden. Die Reformatoren und ihre Schüler haben mir den Christus gezeigt, der mir das Leben gerettet hat. Es wäre ein schlim-

mes Missverständnis, den reformatorischen Glauben als veraltete Romantik oder als lähmenden Pessimismus abzulehnen. Denn die kirchlichen Formen des Abendlandes machen nicht das Wesen des Protestantismus aus. Nein, nicht die Reformation, sondern die neuzeitliche Entwicklungslehre ist die blutarme Mutter der Verzweiflung. Denn jeder unbiblische Optimismus schlägt um, wenn Belastungen kommen, denen menschliche Kraft nicht gewachsen ist.

Aber was haben denn die Reformatoren gelehrt? Was scheinbar jedermann weiss und was doch in Wahrheit ein Geheimnis Gottes ist, das Jahrhunderte nicht verstehen. Zuerst einmal dies, dass der Mensch, er mag so fromm sein wie er will, so klug, so erfahren wie er will, dennoch nicht imstande ist, sich selber selig zu machen. Dass die Welt nicht ist, was sie scheint, und dass keiner von uns ist, was er scheint. Die unerbittliche Sachlichkeit braucht man nicht erst von den neuesten Romanschriftstellern oder den heutigen Medizinern und Ingenieuren zu lernen. Die Reformatoren haben sie längst gehabt. Die unerbittliche Weltbetrachtung der alten und neuen Gottlosigkeit ist darum so unerträglich, auch nicht überzeugend, weil sie nur die Wirklichkeit der Welt in ihrer unverhüllten Scheusslichkeit zeigt, ohne ihren heiligen Richter und ihren gnadenvollen Schöpfer. Darum ist es auch nicht bloss Mangel an ernster Wahrhaftigkeit, wenn der Pessimismus immer wieder umschlägt in Optimismus. Denn dieser Optimismus ist nicht nur verantwortungsloser Leichtsin, sondern das ganz richtige Gefühl dafür, dass Gott Liebe ist und nicht Zerstörung. Aber zuerst einmal machen es die Reformatoren ernst mit einer tiefsten Menschenbetrachtung. Sie gehen nicht aus von der Vortrefflichkeit des Menschen, sondern von seinem Fall. Sie glauben nicht an den menschlichen Geist, sondern an den Heiligen Geist, der nicht etwa vom Menschen ausgeht, sondern vom überweltlichen Gott. Und sie tun das nicht aus Engherzigkeit oder aus orthodoxer Harmlosigkeit. Im Gegenteil, ich halte unsere modernsten Psychologen für sehr harmlos im Vergleich mit den Reformatoren. Und die Reformatoren haben eine ungleich tiefere Menschenkenntnis und einen ungleich grösseren Reichtum an Lebenserfahrung

wie wohl die meisten heutigen Akademiker, weil sie stets von Gottes heiliger und lebendiger Majestät ausgehen und weil sie sich belehren lassen durch die Heilige Schrift. So hoch ich auch Plato stelle als Lichtstrahl in der Dämmerung, so sehr mich Shakespeare ergreift, beides ja nur so glüht in allen Farben des Nordlichts, so sehr auch uns Abendländern die sittliche Würde des Konfuzius und der tiefe Lebensernst Buddhas Eindruck macht, die erleuchtetsten aller Menschen sind für mich doch die Apostel. Und ich würde sagen, und ich sage es mit tiefer Ueberzeugung, die letzten Aufschlüsse, die Menschen gegeben sind, sind uns gegeben in den Briefen der Apostel, die geschrieben sind nach der Auferstehung Christi. Und das ist das Entscheidende bei der Reformation, dass die Wahrheiten der Apostel in den Seelen der Reformatoren neu aufleuchteten. Und weil dies ein Wunder ist, kann man auch das Geheimnis der reformatorischen Lehre nur durch ein Wunder erfassen, durch persönliche Begnadigung. Dabei werden die Reformatoren auch dem Natürlichen durchaus gerecht. So finden wir etwa in Calvins Institutio, Teil 1; die feinsten Bemerkungen über die Weisheit der Alten, und solche Dinge, wie sie etwa Calvin über die Herrlichkeit der Schöpfung sagt, finden sich nicht einmal in Goethes letzten Gesprächen, dem geistig reichsten Liebhaber der Natur, den das neuere Abendland kennt. Aber allerdings, in den Dingen der Erlösung des Menschen da versagt nach der Lehre der Reformatoren menschliche Weisheit und Kraft. Und es ist kein stärkerer und grundsätzlicherer Gegensatz zu denken als der Glaube der Reformation und die Spekulationen der neueren Philosophie. So scharfsinnig auch Calvin und so künstlerisch immerhin Luther gewesen sein mag, sie waren keine Idealisten und keine Realisten, sie waren weder Philosophen noch Naturalisten, sie waren weder phantastische Ueberflieger noch waren sie dem Säkularismus verfallen, sie waren Männer des Glaubens. Aber die Reformatoren wissen nicht nur von der Not des Menschen und seiner wirklichen Lage etwas zu sagen, sondern sie glauben an die Versöhnung des Menschen. Als Jesus am Kreuze starb, da wurde durch einen hochheiligen Akt mein ganzer alter Mensch im Urteil Gottes gerichtet.

Wir reden immer vom Wunder, hier *ist* das Wunder. Jesus hat am Kreuz in Ewigkeit genug getan für meine Sünde und für meine ganze sündige Art, mit der ich mein ganzes Leben zu streiten habe. Als Jesus starb, starb ich mit ihm — im Urteile Gottes. Als Jesus von den Toten auferstand, stand ich mit ihm auf im Urteile Gottes. Als Jesus gen Himmel fuhr, fuhr ich mit ihm gen Himmel. Also alles, was Jesus getan und gelitten hat, hat er stellvertretend für mich gelitten, und nun lebt Christus als mein Versöhner und trägt mich und all meine Anliegen. Dieses Evangelium der Stellvertretung wurde in den Herzen der Reformatoren lebendig. Sobald ein von seiner Sünde angefochtener Mensch dieses göttliche Geheimnis verstanden hat, hört alle fromme Selbstquälerei auf, mit der wir uns und die anderen martern. Die Reformatoren verstanden, dass es eine Heiligung gibt, die nur in der Phantasie besteht, diese Heiligung haben sie zertrümmert und darum heissen sie mit Recht Propheten. Die von ihnen bekämpfte Frömmigkeit ist ätherisch fein, seraphisch und dabei doch eine halb verführerische, halb widerliche Umgebung der erhabenen und nüchternen Darstellung des Neuen Testaments. Die Kirchenmusik Johann Seb. Bachs und die grossen Oratorien Händels, die vor allem unsere englischen Freunde mit Recht lieben und so schön singen, stellt die echt reformatorische Frömmigkeit vollendet dar in ihrer majestätischen Kraft, in ihrem Schwung und Feuer, auch in ihrer tiefen Seele und ihrer zarten Innerlichkeit, einer Kraft, die nie roh wird und einer Innerlichkeit, die nie süsslich wird, einer Frömmigkeit, die den Menschen in seiner Seele gesund macht. Wo lernten denn die Reformatoren diese Erlösung des Menschen durch das vollkommene Werk Christi für uns? Sie lernten sie aus der Bibel. Sie stellten den Glauben weder auf ein mystisches Naturgefühl, noch auf die Seele, denn sie wussten, dass unsere Phantasie uns täuscht und dass unsere Seele hin und her schwingt. Luther hatte keine gereifte Stellung gegenüber der Musik, wie alle seelisch leicht erregbaren Menschen, die sich vor ihr fürchten. Aber er hatte eine an Gottes Wort gezüchtete Phantasie. Auch nicht auf das Denken stellten die Reformatoren den Glauben. Die Leiden-

schaft für die Spekulation ist meist ein Anzeichen dafür, dass dem grübelnden Menschen der Friede fehlt. Denn die letzte Frage alles Denkens heisst Warum. Und dies Warum ist letztlich eine Anklage an Gott : Warum hast du die Welt so geschaffen und warum führst du mich nicht anders ? Aber die Reformatoren waren nicht Weltweise, sondern Zeugen der Versöhnung, und gerade so sahen sie klarer als alle Philosophen. Aber auch ihr stürmischer Wille war nicht der Grund ihres Glaubens, denn sie hatten die wichtige Erkenntnis, die aus reicher Lebenserfahrung stammt, dass auch bei dem an Gott hingegebenen Menschen der Wille schwankt. Also Luther vermeidet den Weg des Künstlers, den des Denkers und den des Machtmenschen und stellt den Menschen allein auf die Bibel. Genau so aber tat Calvin, und zu der Innigkeit und Leidenschaft des deutschen Mönches trat nun die Majestät und Klarheit des Franzosen ; nicht nur in Wittenberg, sondern auch in der Cathedrale St. Pierre in Genf wurde die Rechtfertigung allein aus dem Glauben an das Vollkommene ewig gültige Opfer Jesu gepredigt, das nie wiederholt wird und nie wiederholt werden darf. Wir sind vollkommen durch das Opfer Jesu. Calvin stellte die Rechtfertigung genau wie Luther dar. Er lehrte streng die zugerechtete Gerechtigkeit und lehrte, dass die Heiligung des Menschen das Werk Gottes ist. Es ist nun ein Irrtum zu meinen, nur Luther hätte tiefere Heilserfahrungen gemacht und Calvin hätte dann als scharfsinniger Theologe der regellos daherbrausenden Genialität Luthers Form verliehen. Auch Calvin hatte schwere Seelenkämpfe durchgemacht und spricht einmal von einer plötzlichen Bekehrung, durch die es Gott gefallen habe, ihn zu sich zu ziehen. Was uns wie Kühle anmutet, ist nur die Gabe und Eigenart des grossen französischen Schriftstellers, die ruhige und erhabene Linie des ganzen Aufbaus. Alle Reformatoren hatten die Leidenschaft für die Bibel. Der Moderne empfindet oft die Bibel als Schlagbaum für seine Gedanken und als Gefängnis seiner Seele, weil er das Wort Gottes ohne die Erleuchtung des Heiligen Geistes liest. Die Reformatoren aber schlugen in quälender Gewissensnot und in Todesangst die Bibel auf und fanden in ihr das Zeugnis von der Versöhnung. Sie

lasen und wurden dadurch innerlich lebendig. Ihre Empfindungen wurden beruhigt und ihre hin und her eilenden Gedanken geklärt. Nie haben die Reformatoren gemeint, dass der Einzelne durch seinen Verstand die Bibel verstehen könne und haben doch dabei jedes Lehramt, das den Gläubigen gesetzlich bindet, abgelehnt. Sie lehrten, dass der Heilige Geist unmittelbar dem um sein Heil Bekümmerten das in der Bibel lebendig mache, was er brauche. Der Geist Gottes selbst belehrt mich aus der Schrift, dass das geschichtliche Werk Christi für mich gilt. Und zu gleicher Zeit lehren die Reformatoren nach den Aposteln, dass der Gläubige im Himmel frei gesprochen wird und dass dieser Freispruch ihm in seinem Herzen durch den Heiligen Geist versiegelt wird, dass er also einen durchschlagenden Gewissenseindruck bekommt, der auch sein Gemüt freudig erhebt. Mit vollendeter Sachkenntnis lehrte hierüber Prof. Eduard Böhl, der Schwiegersohn des Dr. Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrüge, in dessen Predigten ich nicht nur die letzten Geheimnisse meiner Seele, sondern auch das Heil und die Freude meiner Seele gefunden habe. Es ist also ein Doppeltes, was uns die Reformatoren sagen. Der Heilige Geist wirft sein mächtiges und klares Licht auf die Schrift und zu gleicher Zeit erfüllt er mein Herz. Die Reformatoren waren weder Mystiker, noch waren sie Deisten, sie lehren die Ueberweltlichkeit Christi und zu gleicher Zeit lehren sie die Einwohnung Christi im Herzen der Gläubigen. Der Vorsitzende unseres Weltbundes, Francis Miller, sagte im Herbst zu den deutschen Sekretären: „Wir brauchten einmal eine Konferenz, in der wir uns aussprechen über das Wesen der christlichen Erfahrung“, und er meinte dabei, die angelsächsischen Sekretäre hätten von den holländischen und deutschen zu lernen, dass unser Heil im Objektiven beruht, im Werke Christi. Und wir Kontinentalen müssten uns wiederum von den angelsächsischen Freunden das sagen lassen, dass es im Christentum ohne Erfahrung auch nicht abgeht. Ich stimme dieser Bemerkung unseres Vorsitzenden vollkommen zu. Es ist immer ein grosser Tag in der Geschichte der Kirche, wenn in den Herzen einiger Menschen ein neues Verständnis erwacht für die grossen Gnadenlehren der

urchristlichen Apostel, wenn wieder Menschen auftreten, die den Mut haben, sich nichts mehr vorzumachen, wenn sie aber dabei nicht beim Pessimismus anlangen, sondern beim Glauben an die Allmacht der Gnade. Möge es dem allmächtigen Gott gefallen, uns im Weltbund wieder eine Bewegung zu geben hin zur Versöhnung. Für dies Evangelium erwacht in vielen wieder neues, vielleicht erstes Verständnis. Verschiedene grosse Schriften Luthers sind in den letzten Jahren neu aufgetaucht, so die Vorlesung über den Römerbrief, den Hebräerbrief, das Buch gegen Erasmus. Luther wird neu und mit neuen Augen gelesen, Calvin wird gelesen. Zweitens ist die Lutherforschung gereinigt und vertieft. Es war ein schwerer Schade der Theologie und ein schwerer Mangel der Seelsorge, dass die Reformation im Zeitalter des bürgerlichen Protestantismus von einigen unserer berühmtesten Theologen idealistisch verzeichnet worden ist. Die so Belehrten waren nicht imstande, die lebendige Erfahrung der Rechtfertigung in die Seelsorge zu bringen und den Glauben des Auferstandenen an die Gräber. Drittens erwacht durch Gottes geheimen Rat wieder Verständnis für einige im 19. Jahrhundert zugedeckte Rechtfertigungsprediger. Und in unserer Zeit erwacht wieder das Verständnis für den Wert der Bücher von Eduard Böhl und Johannes Wichelhaus. Viertens versucht die sogenannte dialektische Theologie durchzustossen durch allen idealistischen Nebel, der das Neue Testament verhüllt, und ringt wieder um einen männlichen und reinen Glauben. Nur dass das alles in reiner Liebe geschehe, ohne Parteigeist, ohne Schlagworte, dass es uns geschenkt werde, tief und dabei weitherzig klar und dabei milde zu werden. Kurz, wie in der Musik, so auch in der Theologie sucht man wieder die Alten. Unsere Aufgabe ist es nun, nicht die Reformatoren gesetzlich zu wiederholen, und uns auf ihre Lehren gesetzlich festzulegen, aber ihre Art, die Schrift zu betrachten und ihre geistlichen Erkenntnisse hineinzubauen in unser Zeitalter. Wenn die Reformatoren am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts zeitgemäss waren, so sind sie es jetzt viel mehr, weil sie ernst machten mit der Furchtbarkeit der Welt, in der wir leben, weil sie rechneten mit einer wirklichen persönlichen Macht der Finsternis, aber

ebenso rechneten mit einer göttlichen Erlösung, die uns nicht zwingt aus dieser Welt in ein Traumland hinauszuflihen, sondern gerade uns Kraft gibt, nüchtern und froh in dieser Welt im Glauben auszuhalten und ihr zu dienen.

Résumé

An attempt is here made to deal with this subject as it presents itself to a Secretary of the German Student Movement, in the hope that it will be of service to students and leaders of the Federation. We can serve one another best in the Federation by learning to respect one another's point of view, whilst at the same time we refrain from seeking to impose our own attitude upon others.

The older amongst the Continental members of the Federation were born in an age which has been called that of middle-class liberalism. This expression signifies not a political conviction, but a spiritual outlook, distinguished by the fact that it was opposed alike to the orthodox traditions of the Church and to modern tendencies. It is best represented by Gustav Freytag, whose novel *soll und Haben* was the most widely read of the 19th century. This middle-class culture was sound and sensible, holding fast to the distinction between good and evil, and produced a number of admirable characters and some brilliant intellects. It was, however, lacking in ultimate depth and other-worldly enthusiasm. Its representatives were marked by a curious remoteness from the faith of the Apostles. The most profound and subtle German composers of this period, Johannes Brahms and Robert Franz, fed their spirits on the best that they could find in religious music, and were diligent students of the Bible, but they were torn in conflict between obstinate doubts and deep and strong feeling, and were in bondage to the rationalist spirit of their age. For many of their contemporaries the Christian faith itself took on the same this-worldly, rationalist and moralist form. Luther was viewed through the eyes of the "enlightenment" school or the philosophy of Kant. Wagner and Liszt, true geniuses, do not belong to this middle-class school. They were capable of feeling the mysterious and other-worldly side of life. But their mystical and phantastical tendencies, coupled with the un-German and worldly character of their external life, prevented many from being led by them back to the New Testament.

By way of reaction from rationalism there is now a tendency towards a phantastic belief in the miraculous, which sees primitive

Christianity through a veil of imaginative enthusiasm. A number of those who have attempted to awaken in their contemporaries an understanding for the other-worldly element in the New Testament, have failed on this account. Recent presentations of the early Christians, whether theological or artistic, picture the Apostles and their followers as wild enthusiasts. In reality the Holy Spirit, whilst filling men with passion and ardour, creates in them a perfect sanity. The Christian re-birth is marked by serenity and joy, and by a sense of power coupled with peace. Of recent years men have tended to confound the working of the Holy Spirit with the effects of natural intoxication, and thus to waver between a shallow moralism and speculative criticism, on the one hand, and a visionary enthusiasm, on the other. Tolstoy and Francis of Assisi, Goethe and Kant, are regarded as the greatest followers of Christ. But these men, in spite of their profound humanity, their intellectual greatness and subtlety and social enthusiasms, are far from the saintly calm and serenity of the Reformers, the clearness and purity of spirit of the Apostles Paul and John.

Spiritual conflicts lasting over many years, rather than the study of spiritual development or history, have brought the author to this view, and have driven him back to the Reformers and their reading of the New Testament. It is a strange fact that the 19th century should have culminated in a band of prophetic spirits who bore witness before their contemporaries, with new experience and in a new language, to the Christ of the Apostles. The best known of this school at the present time is the Dane Søren Kierkegaard, the preacher of the Christianity of the inward man. His little book "The Practice of Christianity" contains the all-important saying: "The proof of the truth of Christianity lies in more perfect imitation of Christ," which definitely marks the deliverance of Christianity from its bondage to the intellectualist view-point. In 1852 appeared the *Apostolic Age* of Heinrich v. Thiersch, the third edition of which, in 1879, showed that the New Testament was to be once more the great book of the twentieth century. In 1853 Charles Kingsley wrote *Hypatia*, an impressive picture of Alexandria in the 5th century and one of the greatest apologies for the Christian faith. Every modern student should read it. In 1883 Henry Drummond, Professor of Biology at Glasgow, wrote *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, in which the experiences of Christian re-birth are set forth in the light of modern scientific knowledge. For thousands this book was the means of reconciling heart and intellect and bringing them back to the New Testament. Drummond, in opposition to Darwin, recognised in love the driving force of existence.

In 1884 Friedrich Zündel wrote his book, *Jesus* in which, in contradistinction to the liberal life-of-Jesus movement, Christ is presented, in a manner at once quite modern and quite in the spirit of the Bible, as a worker of miracles. In 1892 appeared the work of Professor Martin on the so-called historical Jesus and the Christ of the Bible, which cut at the roots of the analytic criticism of the New Testament. This work combats both the denial of the transcendence of Jesus and the effort to obscure his true manhood, and shows that the Christ preached in the early Christian community was truly the historical Jesus of Nazareth, perfected by the Cross, the grave, and the Resurrection. It teaches us once more to regard the Gospels and the Epistles as a unity. It is a book which should be translated into English and studied by the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon theological school. It had great influence on the leaders of the German Student Movement thirty years ago.

But, great as was the influence of these penetrating Bible students and apologists of the 19th century, the author declares that his greatest help in his utmost need has not come from them. "The Reformers and their followers have shown me the Christ, and He has saved my life". The Reformed faith must not be dismissed as old-fashioned romanticism or crippling pessimism. It is not the Reformation but the modern theory of development which is responsible for the spirit of despair. All un-Biblical optimism brings its inevitable reaction when calamities come which are beyond the power of the human spirit to bear.

What then is the teaching of the Reformers? It is at once familiar to all and a mystery of God which the centuries have failed to understand. First of all, that man, let him be as pious, as wise, as experienced as he may, cannot save himself. That the world is not what it seems, that none of us are what we seem. Absolute objectivity of outlook is not peculiar to the modern novelist or scientist; it is to be found in the Reformers. The view of the world in which God has no part is unbearable and unconvincing because it presents all the wretchedness of reality but leaves out the divine Judge and the merciful Creator. The ever-recurring reaction from pessimism to optimism is not merely due to irresponsibility and want of earnestness, but rather to the sound feeling that God is love and not destruction. But the Reformers take a deep and serious view of human nature. They start not from the excellence of man, but from the Fall. They believe not in the human intellect, but in the Holy Spirit, which is not of man but of God. And this is no mere uncritical orthodoxy. On the other hand, modern psychologists often appear much more uncritical than the Reformers, who have

a deep knowledge of human nature and wide experience of life, because they start from the divine and living power of God and the study of the Bible. For the author, the Apostles are the wisest and most enlightened of all men, before whom Plato and Shakespeare, Confucius and Buddha pale into insignificance. And the final revelation which has been accorded to men is to be found in the Epistles of the Apostles, written after the Resurrection of Christ.

The marvel of the Reformation is that it saw a re-awakening of the apostolic truth in the hearts of the Reformers. And because this was a miracle, we can only understand the Reformed teaching and make it our own by a miracle, — by the personal gift of grace. Although the Reformers showed great wisdom and insight in regard to the things of this world, it was their teaching that, in the matter of salvation, human wisdom and strength are of no avail. There can be no greater contrast than that between the faith of the Reformation and the speculation of modern philosophy. Luther and Calvin were neither idealists nor realists, neither philosophers nor men of science ; they were men of faith. They not only tell us of the misery of man and his actual state, but they believe in his redemption. The death of Christ upon the Cross was the judgment of the world and of man before God. In the death of Christ we all died. When Christ rose from the dead, we rose with Him. His death and sufferings were vicarious, for us and for our sins, and an eternal reconciliation and atonement for us and for them. This truth, this miracle, became once more a living force in the hearts of the Reformers. When a man who is struggling with sin understands this truth, his self-torment ceases. The Reformers realised that there is a sanctification which exists only in the imagination ; this they destroyed, and therefore we rightly call them prophets. The piety which they condemned is aesthetic and full of a species of false mysticism. The true piety of the Reformation is represented in the Church music of Bach and the Oratorios of Händel ; it is full of power and enthusiasm but at the same time deep and tender ; it is eminently sound and sane. This conception of the redemptive act of Christ came to the Reformers from the Bible. They based their faith neither on a mystic approach to Nature, nor on inner experience, for they knew that the imagination deceives us, and that inner experience varies. Nor did they base it on thought. The passion for speculation is a sign of the lack of inward peace, and leads ultimately to reproach to God: Why didst Thou create the world thus ; why hast Thou treated me in this way ? Neither did they base it on the human will, for experience of life had taught them that the will may weaken and waver. Both Luther and Calvin taught men to take their stand on the Bible alone ;

both preached justification through faith in the perfect and eternal sacrifice of Jesus, never to be repeated. Calvin, like Luther, taught the doctrine of justification and that the redemption of man is the work of God. All the Reformers studied the Bible with passion. We moderns often feel the Bible as a prison for our thought, because we read it without the light of the Holy Spirit. But the Reformers went to it in torment of conscience and the fear of death, and found there the assurance of reconciliation. They did not teach that the individual can *understand* the Bible intellectually, and yet they rejected the idea of a body of teachers whose doctrine the faithful were bound to accept. They taught that through the Bible the Holy Spirit gives to the soul in search of salvation that which he needs. And they also taught, like the Apostles, that the faithful receive the inward assurance of pardon and redemption, and that this assurance brings them joy and peace of mind. The Holy Spirit illuminates for us the Scripture, and fills our hearts. The Reformers were not mystics nor deists; they taught the transcendence of Christ, and also that Christ dwells in the hearts of the faithful. The Chairman of the Federation, Francis Miller, said to the German Secretaries last autumn: "We need to have a Conference in which we could discuss the nature of Christian experience". He meant that the Anglo-Saxon Secretaries needed to learn from the Dutch and Germans that our salvation is outside us, in the act of Christ. We Continentals on the other hand, needed to learn from our Anglo-Saxon friends that without experience Christianity is impossible. It is a great day in the history of the Church when a new understanding for the great teachings of the Apostles awakens in the hearts of a small number of men, when these men have courage to face realities without falling a prey to pessimism, but with faith in the omnipotent power of Grace. A new understanding of this truth is apparent. First, the writings of Luther are being freshly studied; Calvin is being read. Secondly, their doctrines are being given a newer and deeper interpretation. In the era of middle-class Protestantism the doctrines of the Reformers were falsely and idealistically interpreted by some of the most famous theologians. Men so taught were unable, in their apostolic work, to bring to others the living experience of justification and faith in the Risen Christ. Thirdly, there is a new understanding of certain preachers of the doctrine of justification who, during the 19th century, were disregarded. The books of Eduard Böhl and Johannes Wichelhaus are being read with new insight. Fourthly, the new dialectical theology is seeking to force its way through the clouds of idealism in which the New Testament has been obscured. In theology as in music, we are going back to the old masters. It is for us to seize

not the letter but the spirit of the Reformation, and to make it a part of our age. For if the Reformers were in tune with the needs of the early 16th century, they are still more so with the needs of today, for they were fully conscious of all the evils and wretchedness of the world, they believed in a personal power of darkness, but they believed too in a divine redemption which gives us strength to hold firmly to our faith even in this world, and so to serve it.

Theistic Trends in American Thought

Stewart G. COLE

What a person believes about the nature of God has become much more than a private or academic subject in America. As men attempt a unification of their knowledge of things, gleaned from diverse spheres of inquiry, they learn that their idea of deity may be not only an *a priori* postulate in a philosophy of life, but also an instrument of personality tempered by the quality of accumulative experience. It is significant, therefore, to observe the vital current interest in this theme. The question thrusts itself upon such natural scientists as venture to think through the steps involved in moving from a cosmogony to a cosmology. Students of society discover the potency of the theistic appeal in their investigation of human groupings, and not a few feel obliged to estimate its validity by the findings of psychological research. Social workers cannot penetrate far in their analysis of ethical topics without regarding the widely accepted sanctions of deity. The art critic is attempting a resolution of the apparent inconsistency arising between traditional confidence in pure beauty and growing acquaintance with aesthetic realism. Within the limited scope of this article, it is the writer's purpose to indicate a few of the reasons for the wide interest in this subject and to point out some trends in theistic thought in America. The recurrence of dogmatism in fundamentalist circles is passed

over, for this phenomenon represents an effort to check thinking rather than to justify belief in God in the full light of modern scholarship.

Men generally exercised unquestioned faith in the existence of God until recent times. They might differ widely in the content they imputed to the symbol "God", but they were theists. Faith in the Almighty was the first axiom of religion and the *sine qua non* of participation in Christianity. Atheists were few and were men greatly to be feared. Such individuals had committed the most serious of heresies and merited the strongest anathema of cultured people. Today the situation is changed. If there are more sceptics, there are also more people who refuse to accept a view of life which promises "safe" and "easy" returns for the cosmic investment of personality in order to escape the responsibility of first-hand thinking. Not a few students of our time are risking every sense of historic religious security in order to examine more deeply into the secrets of being as they are divulged piecemeal by investigators, and to inquire in a radical manner if in the universe there are evidences of goodness and justice that care for human values. This kind of interrogation has been precipitated in America largely by three educational movements and one social condition in home-church circles.

To date, the net results of the historical method of biblical study have not been an unmixed blessing for the theistic believer. Such men as Harper, Kent, Case and Scott have been motivated by a serious desire for literary and social truth in their examination of the Scriptures. They have asked: What was the nature of the problems, the interests and the ideals, that the early Christians inherited, and how did they restate them in their generation? What have the authors of the biblical documents actually meant to convey to the constituency to which they addressed themselves? Scholarship has succeeded in uncovering large areas of the religious "milieu" of the Hebrew-Hellenistic culture, and as a result revealed the previously hidden meanings of sections of the Bible. Necessarily, their work shows that the church has entertained many false conceptions of the life and work of biblical persons; it also clarifies probable viewpoints of

these founders of Christianity. Christians were never in possession of as much reliable information about the genesis of their religion as they are at present. They can hew their cosmic course more advisedly in the light of historical truth, and that is no mean advantage. It is indispensable to wise building.

At the same time, commitment to this biblical approach makes necessary a theological revision of the believer's faith. Formerly, when he studied the Scriptures, he examined "the Word of God". According to the historical technique, he is seeking to know what human agents have conceived to be God's will for them. Herein lies a subtle shift in inquiry: the student's first loyalty is given to the findings of a social investigation; what "God" said may or may not follow as a logical consequence. Indeed, it may even be presumed only as a helpful inference based as much on the man's personal faith as upon the discoveries he has made. Theologians have become keenly aware of the unbridged gap between the Bible conceived as a revelation of God and as a record of the historical quest of a people for salvation in God. The preacher is conscious of the same difficulty when he attempts to be true to the position of biblical scholarship and yet use the book as an instrument of divine inspiration.

But the problem is further accentuated because anthropological study of the Bible has forced the experts to become sceptical about many reported data that were previously accepted as historically authentic in the Christian faith. Although certain portions of the Old Testament remain "closed" to full understanding owing to lack of archeological evidence to determine their meaning, for Christians the situation is more serious in reference to the New Testament. The person of Jesus is still enfolded in considerable darkness, and that in reference to some of the most important factors in His public ministry. Despite the fact that there have been published several "biographies" of Jesus in recent years by the ripest students of Christian sources, they have not been life histories in any real sense. They have thrown considerable light upon the Galilean's world of action, but they have not pretended to give a full portrait of His person. They cannot.

Too many problems remain to allow a thorough acquaintance with the man and His times.

Recognition of this fact only increases the difficulty of using the Scriptures to defend theism. Neither the logic nor the conclusions of the historical method of Bible study permit their exponent to make any direct assertions about the nature or character of God. On the other hand, they encourage strictly human concessions, and force the believer to reconstruct his theological faith in terms of more fundamental postulates of belief.

What the historian has accomplished with the Bible for Christian thinkers, the scientist has with the cosmos. The grip that naturalism has come to have upon every type of American thought is quite phenomenal. Any theistic system that fails to consider the principles of science may not be expected to survive long in liberal circles. The evolutionary hypothesis has been purified much since Darwin's day and, although still subject to constant revision, has given man a view of the historical process of cosmic and human developments that promises to abide. The technique of astrophysics has matured sufficiently to permit its exponents to determine the hitherto hidden sources and movements of vast universes beyond our own, and to predict with an amazing degree of probability the course of growth that the cosmos has mapped out for itself for millions of years to come. Even the secret of life itself may be discovered yet by the pressure of experiments in the chemical laboratory, while its component parts have been catalogued already by the method of quantitative analysis.

These views challenge man's historic faith in God as the creator and the preserver of this grand scheme of things. Science has committed itself to explain everything man experiences by strictly secondary causes. It cannot give consideration to the activity of any "non-natural" agent in the worlds disclosed by sense, and this axiom is insisted upon by men who confess to sharing the view of religion as by those who deny it. It would be foolhardy for the theist to surrender his faith in God in the first full blush of the philosophy of science. This tendency is altogether too

prevalent in sophomore circles of collegiate thought in America. But that it should give Christian men a rude shock and enlist more critical inquiry into the grounds of theism is an advisable reaction. If theologians must surrender confidence in the supernatural as an other-worldly realm of independent activity, and fiat interventions in nature as its necessary correlative in religion, can they justify belief in a divine One whose habitat is this natural world while he still transcends strictly human participation in it? This question thrusts upon the seeker an additional need of reconsidering the basis of belief in God.

A third American movement has grown to considerable proportions and become a force to reckon with in theological reconstruction. That is, the new humanism. For some it has become a substitute "gospel" for conventional evangelism, in church work. The social approach to Christianity that was formulated by such men as Bushnell, Gladden, Rauschenbusch and Mathews, tended to shift responsibility for the improvement of man's lot in the world, more and more from faith in divine intervention to the enlistment of human ingenuity. What Christians had been taught to believe through the centuries as being the curse of original sin and an inescapable cross to be borne, became, by means of an understanding of the laws of social heredity, the fruits of ignorance and selfishness. This burden could be lifted as men learned more appropriate ways of behaviour and dared to regard the welfare of others as they treasured their own worth. This view of religion gathered increasing dynamic when it was discovered that the Hebrew prophets and Jesus were great moral crusaders marking out better highways for mankind.

This humane gospel has been reinforced by the claims of the social sciences. Psychology has helped churchmen to understand that personality is subject to the laws of growth. Growth of whatsoever kind eventuates by an organism's unbroken adjustment to its environs. The social setting of man is constituted of economic, civic, domestic and ethnical groupings in a given *Zeitgeist* which forces interact upon the person to develop habits of character-formation. The

Christian is a man of a certain type of good character. These trends of thought tend to pare down more and more the individual's sense of creatureship, subject to a sovereign God, and to inspire him with a conviction that he is creator in the making of his own destiny. As a matter of fact, the left wing of the Christian humanists has taken the position that man is the finest flower of the cosmic evolutionary process and the growing point of its highest realm of possibility. Possessed with the tools of science and social organization, he is the potential trustee of the golden age of the universe. In such a viewpoint, there is no place for faith in an extra-human One such as deity. Man's ally is nature and his goal the enrichment of ethical idealism on a world scale.

When the theist considers the implications of the social gospel or of humanism as such, he faces another test of faith. He must inquire in what respect may the extra-human world be thought of as a spiritual aid in man's struggle for the good life?

In addition to the three educational movements that have imposed weighty considerations upon the Christian theist, a fourth and unfortunate condition has arisen in home and church to make the situation the more difficult to meet advisedly. During the past half century there has been a constant decline in religious instruction in the family and a noticeable weakness on the part of the Christian church to reach the parish constituency with its inspiring hopes. Where formerly the family altar was generally respected and it was popular to go to church and to accept "religion", now the reverse is the case. On account of the communal revolution brought about by big industry and an urbanized society, both parent and priest have fallen considerably out of cultural focus. New secular interests capturing the imagination of youth, lack of "reality" in certain phases of conventional ecclesiasticism, the ethical uncertainties in shifting adult education, the spirit of lawlessness so malignant in our time, — these and other factors have encouraged a heavy harvest of religious indifference and theological scepticism. This effect is observed in many student bodies and faculties of American colleges. Many individuals entertain a frame of mind that forbids giving the idea of God

respectable regard. On the contrary, they are responsible for a widespread sentiment that makes religious faith an outgrown illusion to be escaped rather than a profound reality to be explored. Not a few experts in various phases of scholarship, who have published their philosophy of life in one form or another, are strangely silent about matters of religion or openly prejudiced against the claims of the theistic hypothesis. It is in the face of these typical forces, good, bad and indifferent, that certain men are rethinking the doctrine of God. Several specific thought-movements are apparent.

One kind of theologian has met the problems by resorting to a form of rational dualism. He grants that science may pursue its own noble aims without his criticisms and that whatever it embraces is welcome information to the Christian, while at the same time he remains perfectly free to conceive his religious ideals in terms of another range of reality. The data and methods of religion and science do not meet, and consequently do not clash. As Karl Barth has termed it, this man believes in the "infinite qualitative difference" between time and eternity. The reality of God is a precious experience, for He may be fellowshiped through the exercise of the intuitive powers of the soul. Doctrinally, He is conceived by use of *a priori* principles of metaphysics as well as by the fruits of personal contact. The liberal mystics have no doubt but that they hold kinship with eternal Spirit and that their rationalization of such experience gives as reliable truth as mechanistic sciences gives.

This approach offers one distinct advantage for troubled times : it guarantees its sponsors a feeling of cosmic security in a secular atmosphere freighted with metaphysical doubts and uncertainties. The theist can rest content in the full enjoyment of his faith, however critical the scientist's view of truth may be, or however radical his definitions of the Bible, personality, the atom, or the universe. This believer can appreciate the fine values of secular and religious realms of research, and yet escape any incongruity or conflict between them ; he is convinced that as man is higher than material things, so God and His sphere are absolutely superior

to sense and its quanta of commerce. However unsatisfactory this kind of philosophy is to those who demand intellectual harmony in all thought processes, the dualistic approach to truth with its gospel of theistic assurance answers to a deep need in American thought. Formerly supported by the Ritschlian claim for authenticity, now this form of theism is defended by means of the more inwardly authoritative appeal of mystical experience.

The inroads of the new learning have forced some men to take a frankly sceptical attitude towards the theistic postulate. They have witnessed the several sciences penetrate one field of human investigation after another and reduce all experimental data to secondary laws of explanation. The origin and development of the universe has been conceived in strictly cosmological laws of growth ; man has been seen as a struggling child in the system, who has moved faster than the process and has turned upon it to control it for his own ends. " God " as a cultural symbol in the history of religions offers the student a fascinating thesis for psychological research, but that is all. Man's faith has been witnessed in successive manaistic, animistic, monotheistic epochs, — but, in each case, products of a pre-scientific age. Intoxicated by the principles of this age of science, not a few religious leaders consider the idea of God an outgrown instrument of enlightened people ; there is no reasonable place for the hypothesis in a world-view qualified by naturalism and humanism. Should it survive, the only legitimate meaning it can have is as a synthesis of such values as a particular sect may cherish. Even then, " God " is subjective to the group and objective to the individual member only in so far as the symbol gathers up for him a bundle of ethnically-accepted ideals. And, claims this representative, using F.C.S. Schiller's characterization in *Problems of Belief*, such a view of deity for most Christians carries with it a fading dynamic from " three-quarter " to " half " to " quarter " to " make "—belief.

It would be misleading to suppose that all advocates of theistic scepticism were beyond the pale of organized Christianity. As a matter of fact, there are more churchmen

impregnated with this viewpoint than those who care to announce it openly. They are conscientious followers of Jesus who desire to fellowship his social ideals, while they insist upon freedom to accept the philosophy of a scientific age. The writer is reminded of an occasion upon which the late Professor Gerald Birney Smith was conversing with a physicist upon themes relative to religious belief. The theologian asked the scientist, who was an official in an evangelical church, what would be his reply to a young man of unquestioned good character asking for membership in his church but who was unable to affirm faith in the reality of God. The "official" answered quickly and with pious enthusiasm, "I would vote for his admission without raising any embarrassing questions." This episode suggests a situation in American life that is too real and earnest to be simply hypothetical. There are strong-hearted youth, who, having accepted discipleship in the scientific fraternity, are unable to grasp any rational vitality in the claims of current theism.

If they were not so aggressive in their endeavours, a third group of believers might be neglected on account of their small minority in church circles. In so far as their point of view bears on the theme of this article, they are anti-theists in their claims of religion. Not content with being sceptical, they are opposing faith in God. These men are not kin to the Russian Soviet¹ in their revolt against traditional religious beliefs; rather they have based their arguments upon more philosophical foundations, and at the same time with kindly regard for the future of religion. They are countering what they conceive to be an unhealthy intellectual situation. They consider that there is no sound reason in the light of science to rest upon transcendental forces for human aid in the cause of faith, but also that it is dishonest so to do. Men know better and should follow fearlessly the convictions of truth! To continue to teach the appeal of the presence of "God" is to commit an abuse against the highest faculty of man and to lead misguided mortals into

¹ The writer has in mind a more serious and mature type of American student than those who number themselves in the Association for the Advancement of Atheism in America.

a mock paradise. It is bad ethics claims this crusader, and one's immorality is most blameworthy when he deliberately leads his fellows to trust in a deity whom he tacitly knows is not. The "good of humanity" must supplant the "Kingdom of God" ideal in Christianity, and thus emancipate it to become a world-religion of enlightened people.¹ Advocates of this negative approach to theism are numbered chiefly in certain branches of the Unitarian Association. They have found a type of radical student in graduate schools of research who is quite susceptible to their viewpoint. It would be unfair for a person, jealous for the survival of theistic faith, to assume that the anti-theists are destructively inclined towards all idealism in Christianity. Far from it! Among their number are those who are zealously devoted to the humanistic values of the church.

The most promising leaders in theological restatement in America are those who have resorted to the empirical method of inquiry for evidence of the reality of God in human experience. They grant that the old arguments for the existence of deity, the traditional principles of theism in Christianity, and the lately popular philosophy of absolute idealism, are inadequate to cope with the thought-forces of the present. They realise that, however sacred the experience of religion may be, if it is to meet the challenge of science its advocates must enlist the most critical experimental test of its presuppositions and claims. There is no one "school" of empiricists in religion; there are various pioneer minds actively engaged in reconstructive study.

The writings of McDougall, Ellwood and Whitehead, make it clear that many scientists as such are attempting to conceive demonstrable grounds for theistic belief. Their testimony is significant. Perhaps the greatest value lies in the fact that, though they adopt "naturalistic" world-views as scientists, they see no inconsistency in maintaining a personal faith. But to assume that these scholars speak with the same trustworthiness in regard to primary religious issues that they do in reference to their own professional subjects, is

¹ This position has received classical expression in the *Quest of the Ages* by A. Eustace Hayden. Harper and Brothers, 1929.

doubtful. One must not confuse the values of a robust religious personality who has obtained mastery in a non-religious field of human learning with authoritativeness in theological scholarship. Undoubtedly, Christian apologists have made such men the bearers of much propaganda in reference to theism (as irreligious scientists have been made the defenders of theistic scepticism) in our time. In general, the problems in philosophy of religion are more difficult to resolve than their conclusions have indicated, and the methods of approach less apparent than their awareness signified. Theology has a particular field of history and scholarship as physics, psychology and sociology have, and few men can claim without immunity to specialisation in two thought-worlds of such marked contrast.

One of the first theologians to attempt a doctrine of God based on empirical study was D.C. Macintosh of Yale Divinity School¹. The writer recalls the fresh and provocative treatment of the subject which the author offered to the very old question when he shared his manuscript with a group of students in 1920. Macintosh invited a thoroughly modern approach when he sought to justify faith in God by the inductive method of secular science. His thesis was that man in "religious experience at its best" and by "the right religious adjustment" so relates himself to God that the latter responds to the human agent to give him unquestionable religious knowledge of the divine Being. This knowledge includes the theistic attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, absolute moral will, and so on; in brief, most of the traits which traditional Christianity had claimed for deity. Without attempting to make a critical analysis of the author's stages of rational procedure, the writer ventures to raise the pertinent question how a devotee of the scientific method can characterize "empirical" evidence in terms of absolutistic doctrines. Science knows nothing about "absolutely valid ideals", whether in the form of hypotheses or laws. Its realm is forever conditional, and for that reason whatever claims it holds and however significant they are

¹ *Theology as an Empirical Science*, Macmillan, 1920.

for mankind, are entertained tentatively and are ever subject to experimental revision. A careful reading of *Theology as an Empirical Science* leads one to believe that its author rested his case on a set of religious "essences" (very difficult to defend empirically), and that his thesis received more careful support of formal logic than of the tests of historical evidence. At the same time, the student of theism cannot afford to neglect the position which Macintosh has laid down.

In his stimulating work, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*¹, H. N. Wieman of the University of Chicago, has gone one step farther than Macintosh in his loyalty to the view point of science. He believes that this method is the *only* way to gain reliable knowledge about anything. For him, there is no sixth sense of religious intuition, and for that reason there is no such thing as finality of religious truth. If the "God" hypothesis is to survive, it must commend itself to man as a legitimate and reasonable object of faith because all evidence concerning the universe has been taken into account. He ventures to defend the belief that God is the inherent goodness that gets articulation in the universe and that gives the human soul, when fine aesthetic adjustment is made to it, its highest value and meaning. By searching sense experience, this Other is "prehended"; with the help of such truth about the cosmos as mathematical physics can contribute. "God" may be defined in the pattern of a religious philosophy. He is not omnipotent, for He is subject to such limitation as the habits of the cosmic system and the wishes of mankind impose upon Him. Moreover, habits of world-activity are both dangerously evil and hopefully good. The cosmic cause of righteousness is not predetermined by any neglect of the clear witness to widespread areas of chaos within it. Man and God are interdependent in the progressive achievement of the universal good.

There is not the space here to examine the fine points in Wieman's theological system. It should be said in this connection, however, that if the validity of his position is granted, it has no necessary connection with any of the world's

¹ Macmillan, 1927.

great religious faiths. It has no doctrinal association with Christianity. In its regard for the macrocosm in man's experience, it has purposely neglected the appeal of the agent's inherited religious culture. Then, is not further synthesis in empirical study required in order to rethink the doctrine of God in a fully scientific manner? The writer ventures another question which he thinks of major import. In the effort to make any inductive discipline logically sound, must not more careful attention be given to the function of hypotheses (and in this instance, the "God" hypothesis) in conceiving the logic of empirical theism? There is a "method of hypothesis" in logic as there is also a conventional "inductive" view point, and the latter unamended by the former need not be depended upon to give the theological student a sufficiently critical technique for his reconstructive work.

The writer cannot close this review without a reference to an inhospitable attitude on the part of certain theological leaders in America toward the present liberal spirit of inquiry and degree of tentativeness that prevails among empirical students of religion. Would it not be tragic to suppress the creative urge that impels those who are attempting to bring faith in God into more earnest terms with the claims of the sciences? Christianity must meet the aggressive challenge of empiricism or cease to commend its theistic faith to educated people. Such a quest as the religious experimentalist is bent upon does not necessarily make of him a ruthless agnostic or a dangerous atheist. For, is not the Christian's obligation to pursue truth balanced by his responsibility to live by such a conception of God as inspires the better life, so long as that conception is not incompatible with the clearest knowledge he has? May he not be one of Christianity's best allies when he is devoutly engaged in testing methods of ascertaining religious truth?

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

Rediscovering the Message of the Federation

The first document of the "Commission on Message" appointed by the Officers' Committee of the Federation has appeared. It is a study-outline which introduces the study of the message and contains challenging questions for discussion in groups and conferences. Those who want to receive it should write to 13 rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland¹.

The beginning of this common enquiry marks an epoch in the Federation. We are definitely setting out to rediscover what we may say together as a world movement of Christian students to the student world of our days. We are not out for statements and creeds but for that dynamic spiritual reality which should underlie all that we say and do.

The Chairman of the Federation, in a foreword to the document, describes our task as follows :

"The future significance of the Federation depends entirely upon whether as a corporate movement it can demonstrate in the modern world a quality of life and faith which is an authentic expression of the mind and spirit of God and because of that fact equal to the spiritual and ethical needs of our time. Another way of saying the same thing is that the existence of the Federation will be ultimately justified by what its members have to say and do about God as we know Him in Jesus Christ in relation to the actual condition of man.

The condition of man at the present time is being drastically influenced, and will no doubt in the future be even more drastically influenced by external forces issuing from the new technical civilization which is forming, whose ultimate sanctions are the necessities of industrial production rather than the ethics or spiritual values derived from the Christian faith. This civilization is rapidly becoming world-wide in its organization. It has a common technique, a common fund of ideas and a common strategy to achieve its ends.

In the face of these consolidated and unified temporal forces, the Christian community presents a front hopelessly divided both in content of faith and in form of organization. The result is that it is failing to a very large extent to supply the intellectual and spiritual resources which mankind desperately needs. May not a world movement of Christian students be one of the most effective means of preparing the way for a time when the Christian community

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can as a whole fulfil the mission which its faith requires ? What is wanted is not so much a rallying point for defeated and discouraged groups, but a pioneer battalion to lay down the lines along which the great spiritual advances of the future may be expected to take place.

It is evident that in spite of the notable and heroic achievements of members of the Federation in former years, the Federation in its entirety still has a long way to go before it will be really equipped to perform such a service. This is partly due to the fact that our fellowship is in many respects a fairly accurate reflection of the divided state of the Christian community.

But we can no longer accept this position as satisfactory. We believe that it is possible to achieve a much deeper spiritual unity and to establish a more united intellectual and ethical front. As one step in this direction the Federation officers, after consultation with the national movements, have appointed a permanent commission on message, whose function will be to make available to the Federation as a whole the resources of different groups, to stimulate thought and study in the national movements, and to bring information and ideas to the meetings of the Executive and General Committees as a basis for the formation of policy. The members of this commission are : Canon F. A. Cockin (Great Britain), Dr. S. K. Datta (India), Mr. P. C. Hsu (China), Mr. Pierre Maury (France), Mr. Reinhold Niebuhr (U.S.A.), Professor V.V. Zenkovsky (Russia), Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft (Holland), secretary.

The publication of this leaflet represents one stage in the Commission's plan of procedure. It is hoped that the questions here raised may be discussed by select groups in the summer conferences, and that as a result of the criticisms and suggestions received a more elaborate study booklet can be prepared for circulation in the autumn. It seems probable that the General Committee at its next meeting will devote a considerable amount of time to the consideration of the Federation's message, and it is consequently important that the national movements should make adequate plans for group study in the colleges during the winter of 1930-1931, in order that their representatives in the General Committee may have the widest possible background for their contribution to these discussions".

What the Indian Student is Thinking

In every country which is passing through the throes of unrest the student community plays a vigorous, and sometimes an important

part. Quick to respond to emotional appeals, and largely free from the restraint of "vested interests" or long-established conventions, they are generally to be found in the van of any "National Movement", whether its watchword be "Glory", or "Liberty".

In India, where the student community forms an unusually large proportion of the "literate" population (for there are altogether some 50,000 matriculated University students throughout the country), student opinion is almost solid in support of the extremer type of Indian Nationalism, and in antagonism to the present system of government in India. But this is no matter for surprise; for in every country where a similar situation exists (e.g., in Korea or the Philippines), the students show similar tendencies; and Indian students would be more (or less) than human if they did not share in the normal attitude of young men towards their country's problems.

It is worth while for overseas folk to try and understand something of what is "at the back of the Indian student's mind" in this matter; for even if it is marked by a certain immaturity and crudity, it is a factor in the political development of the near future which cannot be wisely ignored; and its effects will be felt in the future, both in India and throughout the Empire. It is from the students of today that the bulk of the teaching and professional classes (and even many of the governing classes) in India will be drawn in the next few years. And although the "first flush" of enthusiasm will pass, and be replaced by a tendency to adopt a policy of "Safety First," still the old instincts will generally remain latent, and in times of special emotion or emergency will re-assert themselves with startling suddenness. Indeed, during the last fifty years in India, though it has been customary in each age to dismiss student opinion as "mere extravagance," it is now evident that in general "what the students have thought today, the statesmen have thought on the morrow."

If we would understand anything of the "spirit" of Indian student life today, it is essential first to realise that its dominant motive — a passionate love of "India the Motherland" — has its roots, not in any reasoned judgment (indeed, what patriotic impulse is *ever* purely rational?), but in something subtler, deeper, more elusive, probably more powerful; something instinctive, "emotional," not in any superficial sense, but in a sense that touches the deeper and abiding springs of thought and action. It is perhaps impossible for any non-Indian wholly to share in this emotion; though anyone who has felt a similar love for "his own, his native land" may surely view it with respect and with a measure of sympathy. At least, it is foolish to ignore it, or to treat it with contempt, or to endeavour

to meet it with cold reasoned arguments, which generally rest on the unconscious assumption that some cause or country other than India is really the touchstone by which the policy of the future must be determined.

It is not difficult for the Westerner to prove, by careful ethnological arguments, that India is not a "Nation," but only a group of tribes, and that Indian "Nationalism" is therefore an illusion; or to show, on the basis of modern economics, how impossible it is for India to dispense with Western capital and commercial control. But such arguments leave the Indian student unmoved; to him they seem superficial; they do not touch the heart of things; but that heart has been touched by the great wave of patriotic idealism which has swept over him and his fellows, as something "given," "sent from above"; inexplicable, but inescapable, calling with a voice that none dare disobey.

A second point to be realised is, that when a wave of patriotic enthusiasm such as this finds itself confronted with a system of government which, however good, is *foreign*, its positive note (love of the Motherland) becomes overpowered by the harsher note of antagonism to that which is felt to be alien and unsympathetic. That is why Indian Nationalism today, especially among students, is so largely negative and critical, rather than constructive. The Indian student of today is not prepared, because of his "dominant enthusiasm", to weigh dispassionately the benefits and the disadvantages of foreign rule; he knows instinctively that it is a thing alien to his spirit, detached from his culture, and therefore unable (even when its intentions are sincerely benevolent) to understand the "things that matter" most to him; but always seeking to impose upon him a system, a culture, and even an ethical standard, which does not really belong to him — or to India.

Against this all his deeper soul revolts. True, he cannot escape the influence of foreign thought, especially in his college life; through lecture and study book it enters into his mind day by day, and changes him, even while he does not know it. But generally his heart remains rooted in the old affections and instincts; in his truest moments he resents the "alien thing" that has been forced into his life by a foreign system of education, and this resentment swells till it becomes the dominant motive of his life and thought. In such a mood, patriotism inevitably takes the form of a desperate struggle against "foreign oppression", and a Fight for Liberty at all costs.

An added bitterness is brought to the struggle through the constant reminders which come to the Indian student that in the

eyes of his rulers he belongs to an inferior race ; and this, clashing with his own inner consciousness of pride in his Motherland, and even more sharply, with his conviction that the deeper spiritual values of life are more truly conserved in India than in the " materialistic West ", leads him to magnify every incident that reminds him of his " fallen estate." That India is not permitted to use a National Flag ; that Indians, though forced to remain in the British Empire, are not allowed freedom of travel or work in large areas of the Empire ; that in the daily round of life (at least in the larger cities) he is constantly reminded, by railway official, police constable, or postmaster, that he is not " master in his own land " of India — all this acts as a constant irritant to feelings already strained, and adds fuel to the fire of his resentment.

When we consider all this, it is surely not a matter for surprise that the Indian student of today is (with few exceptions) an " Extremist " in his attitude to political questions ; as, indeed, he has been for the last twenty years or more. Today, however, there are one or two features which make the student situation somewhat different from that of previous years.

It is marked, in the first place, by an atmosphere of disillusionment and pessimism, which is in sharp contrast to the high hopes of the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921-22. Then most of the students sincerely believed that under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi India was on the very threshold of achieving her national ideals, and that within a few months they themselves would " enter the Promised Land " of their dreams. But — Non-Cooperation failed ; at least, failed to achieve its immediate goal ; and today most of the students realise that a long and weary struggle lies ahead before they can see the India of their dreams — if, indeed, they themselves ever live to see it. They feel that however hard they may labour, it will be only for others — their sons or grandsons — to enter into their labours.

So in the Indian student world today there is an atmosphere of disillusionment, sometimes almost of gloom, as they face a task which proves to be harder than they realised before. And this has produced, for the time, a quietness, at least on the surface, which is entirely different from the wild excitements, student strikes, mass meetings, and demonstrations of eight years ago. But it would be a mistake to put much confidence in this quietness, or to infer that it indicates a real change of mind. There is a " quietness of exhaustion," as well as a " quietness of reconciliation," and the student situation in India today belongs to the former category. The boys are tired and rather depressed, but there has been little or no growth

of goodwill or mutual confidence on either side, and without these there can be no security, for any untoward incident might instantly rouse dormant passions and fan them into a flame as fierce as any that the past has known.

We have tried to analyse the present student situation in India, and to show that it is a natural almost inevitable product of the general position of affairs in the country. Does this, then, mean that nothing at all can be done to relieve a situation which is obviously unsatisfactory, and even dangerous? Not altogether. It is true that student unrest and "extremism" cannot be dealt with in isolation from the national life at large. But students, more than any other class (and Indian students, perhaps more than those of any other nation), are wonderfully open to the appeal of personal friendship, and rarely allow their political views to destroy their normal courtesy and openheartedness towards their teachers, even of foreign race. India is a land where *personality* counts for more than *policy*. That is why the present Viceroy has won for himself an esteem, and even an affection, greater than many whose professions of "liberal principles" have been more vocal. And in the student world of India today, with all its extravagance and cynicism, the door is by no means closed against those who, ceasing to try and combat emotion by argument, will first show themselves able to understand and sympathise with that love of the Motherland which underlies Indian Nationalism, and even when they do not agree with the methods by which it seeks to achieve its goal, will seek rather to point out a "more excellent way" than merely to criticise or confute. India prides herself on her tradition of reverence to the authority of the Teacher, and even in these modern days those who come as teachers to her young men will find singular powers of influence within their reach, provided that they come, not merely as teachers, but also as learners who share with their students the love of India and the sincere desire to promote her best welfare.

E. C. DEWICK

The Response of American Students to the Christian World Mission

Interest in foreign missions in the colleges and universities of the United States and Canada, as in the churches of these two countries, has always centered in minority groups. There are exceptions to this wherein a comparatively small college or a local church spends its best energies on behalf of some missionary project,

but these exceptions are not numerous enough to modify measurably the truth of the general statement.

Again we have to remember that always a much larger number of people are interested in missions than are responsive to the challenge which missions present. It is one thing to be interested in a cause and another to give one's self to it in some effective way. We feel that it is too light a thing to ask students simply to become interested in the Christian world mission. Our appeal to them always is for that definite response which manifests itself in the giving of money or in life commitment itself. Considered from this point of view, we see again how missions in American colleges involve only comparatively few students.

The peak years of student interest in, and response to, the missionary movement in these two North American countries were 1920 and 1921. This interest among students coincided with a renewed interest on the part of the churches and resulted in the sending out from Canada and the United States of 1,731 new missionaries in 1920 and of 1,620 in 1921. Back of this achievement, many forces were at work, but perhaps none was more effectively operative than a spirit of idealism and unselfishness generated during the War but not fully expended in it. After the armistice, the missionary enterprise offered to many the best possible opportunity for continuing that programme of self-giving which the War necessitated. It appealed even more than the War because it was positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive.

However, immediately following these two peak years, something began to happen in the churches (the details of which we need not give here) which resulted in a lessening of missionary interest and enthusiasm, a failure to maintain high standards over a period of years, and a great decrease, relative to increasing cost, in missionary giving. The missionary idealism and purposefulness among students seems to have been maintained for a much longer period, but soon it, too, partly as a result of the condition in the churches and partly as a result of many forces at work which we can classify under the name of post-war reactions, began to wane. From 1921 onward there has been a veritable toboggan-slide in the number of outgoing missionaries and also in the number of students offering themselves as missionaries. The number of new missionaries sailing year by year decreased from 1,731 in 1920 to 558 in 1927; and during the same period the number of Student Volunteers, which is a fair index to the number of students in both Canada and the United States purposing to become missionaries, decreased from 2,783 to 388.

This period, therefore, from 1920-1921 to 1927, both in the

churches and in the colleges, we can characterize as a period of real barrenness so far as interest in and response to missions are concerned. In the student field it may be further characterized as a period of great questioning, in the sense of discounting the whole cause. Outside of a limited circle of students which, by the way, represented a fair cross-section of the student Christian movements of these two countries, almost all the questions asked were touched with caustic criticism and many had back of them a spirit of real cynicism. Such questions as the following will illustrate the point :

Why should we leave non-Christian America in order to become missionaries ?

Have we not just about reached the end of the missionary enterprise ?

After all, is not one religion as good as another ?

Why is religion necessary to life ?

What right have we to try to get other people to accept our religion ?

Churches are not prepared to send us out to the mission field ; why, then, should we purpose to become missionaries ?

During this period a missionary emphasis dropped out of many student Christian Association programmes on local campuses and in week-end and summer conferences. The only redeeming feature in the situation was the beginnings of interest in the industrial aspects of our western civilization and its significance for the human values involved, a similar interest in race relations, and in the great question of international goodwill and universal peace. Often however, these interests have demanded of students nothing more than a bit of time for serious reading or discussion or the sending of a resolution to government officials or legislative committees. With few exceptions they have not called for special enlistment of life itself. Or, to state the matter differently, an interest in these questions of race and peace and industry has been a substitute for a former interest in the work of the Church in all parts of the world ; and students have failed to see that the missionary enterprise, even in these fields of new and special interest, offers opportunities for some of the most effective service possible.

However, during even the darkest part of this particular period some leaders of the church and of the student movements have been persistently and patiently at work in the belief that to the extent that a missionary passion and purpose fail to command our churches and many of our best students, we are recreant to a great human

obligation as well as to a God-given trust and commitment. They have also worked in the faith that the missionary enterprise is worthy of respect of students and will win their respect if legitimate questions are sympathetically answered. And so even though missions could not be considered within the range of the interests of students (as these interests are usually catalogued), it was felt that missionary education should continue and should be followed by a positive call for both personnel and funds.

In the midst of it all, the time came for holding the Tenth Quadrennial Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement. Many people advised us not to hold it at all, saying that students were not interested and would not come. Our reply was: "Some students are interested, some will come, and we cannot but recognise the fact that these big student missionary conventions in the past have generated missionary interest. We must, therefore, do the best we can." The Convention was called for December 28, 1927 to January 2, 1928. When we came together in Detroit, Michigan, we found that we had 3,375 delegates, mostly collegiate, representing 593 colleges, universities, and seminaries.

Detroit seems to have done exceedingly well two things that greatly needed to be done. In the first place, it demonstrated that the missionary movement is a great, ongoing, progressive, constructive and challenging enterprise which is destined to do its best work in years yet to come. In the second place, it demonstrated that in this day of new relations and of nationalism and self-determination, the missionary and the Christian nationals of missionary-receiving countries are not working at cross-purposes but are speaking essentially the same language, working toward the same ends, and are rapidly making whatever adjustments the new situation seems to demand. This latter result was achieved very largely by having both missionaries and able Christian leaders from other lands on the same convention platform.

At any rate, we think we can see in this country that Detroit began to change the situation with reference to missions which up to that time had obtained fairly generally in the colleges. The very fact that the Convention could be held at all was a big manifestation of a hidden missionary interest that many believed did not exist. At least the reverse of this statement is true; namely, failure to have held the Convention at that particular time would have been a most graphic confession of defeat and would have confirmed many people in their opinion that the enterprise itself was dead and was no longer able to command the devotion and allegiance of college men and women.

Secretaries of the Student Volunteer Movement in the months that have followed have found signs of renewed interest traceable almost everywhere to the Detroit Convention. Then immediately after Detroit came the great Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council. It may be a bit presumptuous to speak of our own Convention and this great Jerusalem gathering in the same connection, but it is, I believe, a fair interpretation of the facts to say that Jerusalem greatly accelerated the interest begun at Detroit and gave to all a new and fresh missionary incentive and programme. Again it made available a wealth of material which has proved invaluable in our work among students.

But whether traceable to Detroit and Jerusalem or to other forces, that there is a renewal of missionary interest in the colleges of the United States and Canada is not to be disputed. We see evidences of it on every hand, not the least of which, in our own Student Volunteer Movement, is the fact that during the year 1929 there was an increase over 1928 of 140 % in the number of new Student Volunteers enrolled.

Last fall under the auspices of the Student Y.M.C.A., the student Y.W.C.A., and the Student Volunteer Movement, Dr. John R. Mott held a series of fifteen student meetings in various parts of Canada and the United States. These meetings, involving a formal presentation of observations made by Dr. Mott during his recent world tour, followed by an unhurried time for questions, were able to attract some of the best and most representative Christian students on the college campuses of every area where they have been held. Questions asked Dr. Mott in the forum hours, in contrast with such questions listed above as characteristic of a few years ago, reveal clearly the change which has come about. Today students are asking no fewer questions than they did during the years of post-war reactions, but the element of criticism and cynicism seems to be disappearing. For the most part, questions today grow out of a genuine desire to know the truth and a determination to discern what the truth may mean personally to the one seeking it. The spirit of self-defence, of seeking an alibi, seems to have given way to a willingness to become even a missionary if so doing offers one of the best ways for overcoming the ignorance, poverty, disease, injustice, and sin of this present-day world of ours.

The following are some of the questions which have come out of Dr. Mott's meetings and which are not unlike those which our secretaries are meeting with on almost every hand :

What is the first step toward becoming a missionary, and

what sort of training ought prospective missionaries to receive ?

Is it necessary to have a universal religion ?

What is the best way for students to serve in this day of open doors ?

Do conditions in America make the other nations chary of accepting our Christian message ?

To what extent are Christian nationals taking over the work hitherto done by missionaries ?

What is the relative value of sending missionaries to other lands in contrast to work among foreign students in this country ?

What are the types of service most in demand ?

How can those of us who remain here gain and keep a true perspective of the missionary enterprise ?

Are the different denominational agencies getting together in the missionary enterprise ?

As indicated above, other questions more closely akin to the questions of the former period are still being asked. For example, we have such as :

Who is more sincere in living the teachings of his religion today — the Mohammedan or the Christian ?

Do people of other lands want Jesus Christ or do they want the spirit of internationalism ?

Why is not America the most strategic field ?

But, even if such questions as these predominated, which is not at all the case, the very fact that there is a generous sprinkling of inquiries having back of them a spirit of willingness to follow the truth when discovered is a most encouraging sign.

It is good to be able to say at this time of renewed interest among students that the Church, also, is beginning to show signs of renewed missionary activity.

During 1929, the mission boards of Canada and the United States sent out to the various fields 827 new missionaries. This was a 24 % increase over the number sailing in 1928 and a 48 % increase over the total for 1927.

This is encouraging, but it is far from satisfactory. More than 1,000 new missionaries should be sent out from North America every year simply to compensate for personnel losses through death and retirement. Failure to do this means that so far from increasing

we are actually decreasing the active missionary force. For example, in sending out only 667 new missionaries in 1928, we fell below the replacement level by more than three hundred. And this we have been doing, in varying numbers, since 1925.

This state of things alone should keep us from any too great rejoicing in the slight increases which have come. It should rather help us to see that as far as the colleges and universities are concerned, we must work for a generation of students who are unwilling to let the financial condition of the mission boards be the absolute standard by which they determine their response to the missionary enterprise but who instead will determine their response in personnel and funds by the great realms of unmet human needs the world around. Apart from such a generation of students, we may be able, by the present upward trend of things, to hold our own, but certainly no great advance can be made. We should cease focussing attention on church board deficits and other hindering circumstances and go out with that faith in God and that contagious enthusiasm, inspired in the hearts of all who keep company with Jesus Christ, to do our very best to make Him known, loved and obeyed throughout the world and thus make over this world in which we live after the pattern of Christ-likeness.

Jesse R. WILSON

Anglo-Russian Conferences

As a result of the W.S.C.F. meetings at Nyborg in 1926, the British S.C.M. in cooperation with the Russian S.C.M. in exile has organised annual conferences for Anglican and Orthodox students, most of the latter being drawn from students in the Russian community in Paris. For many years past something has been done to bring about better understanding between Anglican and Orthodox leaders, but these conferences have marked a new development, in that in quite an informal and unofficial way they have brought together young men and women who are members of these two great Churches in Christendom.

Conferences were organised early in the years 1927 and 1928 at the English cathedral city of St. Albans. and at the conclusion of the latter Conference the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius was founded to give some outward expression to the deep fellowship experienced by those who had been privileged to attend such

gatherings. This Fellowship today has a membership of over 250 and endeavours to keep the members in touch with one another through a typescript journal published quarterly. However it has but little organisation and it remains, as at its inception, a fellowship primarily to bind together through prayer and friendship all who have been at one or more Anglo-Russian Conferences.

Like all conferences a great deal of each day is spent in listening to Russian and English addresses on various aspects of Church life, in private conversations, and in group discussions, but unlike many conferences the focus point of the life in these conferences is to be found neither in the addresses, nor in the personal friendships, valuable as both these are, but in the life of worship experienced by all the delegates through these days of conference together. Each day opens with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist for the Anglicans or with the Orthodox Liturgy for the Russians, with all the delegates present on each occasion, and so too, each day closes with either Anglican Evensong or Russian Vespers. There in the historic worship of the Church the life of each Conference has come to its fullest expression. Gathered before the Altar in adoration the barriers which divide us have no longer seemed so powerful, and there already year by year, a foretaste of the unity in the mystical body of Christ, which one day may be ours in God's mercy, has been given to us. It may be that this distinctive note of these Anglo-Orthodox gatherings indicates a fresh approach to the problem of unity which so frequently and insistently demands our attention.

The Fourth Annual Conference held from April 25th to 30th this year, when 35 Russians and 65 English met together, once again found its deepest spiritual unity in the devotional life of those days. It was a happy thing this year that the Orthodox and Anglican festivals of Easter coincided for it meant that both in the Russian and Anglican services there was re-echoed again and again the note of joyful assurance that Christ is risen. This was expressed for all in the closing words of a short sermon which was given by Father Sergius Boulgakoff at the conclusion of the Holy Liturgy on the Sunday of the Conference when in reference to the Russian Church he said: "quite recently in answer to this martyred silence of the Russian Church across the whole of England a response in prayer was heard — We hear!... 'Let the Lord resurrect these bones and let Him reveal His glory! To the whole of the Christian world, to my country and to our English brethren I call — "Christ has risen!" This message of Christ risen with power, stirred in all afresh the faith that through such gatherings God is working mightily among us, mightier may be, than any of us at this moment can recognise.

The time of conference was spent this year in a consideration of the subject of "Holiness". After two introductory papers setting forth the picture of holiness given us in the Person of Our Lord and through the Epistles of the New Testament, papers were read on the conception of holiness embodied in the Russian and Anglican Churches. On Sunday there was only one paper on "The Call to Holiness as it is given to every Member of the Church", the remainder of the day being spent in visits of the delegates to Cambridge and to Thaxted.

The last two days were given to considering the lives of some of the saints in the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, and in facing that call to sainthood in everyday life which comes to everyone who is caught up into that fellowship of the saints, which is the mystical body of Christ — the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. With the exception of Sunday, on each day two hours were spent in small discussion groups, when there was an opportunity for a deeper appreciation and understanding of the various views expressed in the conference. Without question these small discussion groups, together with the many informal talks which took place between the sessions of the Conference, were the means of establishing that richness of friendship which was one of the chief marks of this year's Conference.

In one way, at any rate, the Conference this year witnessed an historic moment in the life of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. We were deeply privileged to have with us both the Metropolitan Eulogius and the Archbishop of Canterbury. No one present will ever forget the gathering in the Conference Hall, when both the Metropolitan and the Primate spoke to us. Most of those present will carry away many memories of these days spent together, but no memory will be more cherished than the presence with us of the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan and the Anglican Archbishop on that day in spring when the whole of nature spoke of newness of life and our hearts were filled with joy because of the message of Easter, and the hope for the future which that meeting held for us all.

If one reflects on the significance of this work, which has come to life within the wider fellowship of the World's Student Christian Federation, the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, spoken at the Conference, come back to one's mind: "I cannot help feeling strongly that here in this Fellowship, in this gathering, there are seeds being sown which will bear fruit in the future, may be in this present century, and fruit far fuller and richer than we can possibly imagine."

R. AMBROSE REEVES

Reflections on a Visit to the American Colleges

After a five months' tour of the American colleges and universities during which he did a great deal of speaking and conferring with student groups Dr. A. Herbert Gray from England has written an open letter to "*The Intercollegian*" in which he shares his major impressions with his readers. We quote from it :

"Let me turn now to the religious situation in the colleges which has been my more immediate concern. I have the most acute sympathy for all the men and women trying to foster the religious life of the student bodies in America. Not for fifty years has the work been so difficult. I have found it very much more difficult than during my last visit seven years ago. The situation has changed completely in the course of a generation and I do not think it difficult to discern the causes which have been at work. The typical religion of American colleges forty years ago, when I first knew them, had certain very great elements in it. It inspired many men and women to heroic living. But it had also certain ominous weaknesses.

There was an obscurantist element in it. It was stubbornly unwilling to face the truth which was even then being discovered by reverent biblical scholarship, and that was bound to mean trouble as these results of scholarship became diffused through general education. It was further prepared, on the basis of a wrong conception of what the Bible is, to challenge certain conclusions reached by patient scientific research — and that was certain to prove a disastrous step in an age fascinated, as ours is, by the amazing progress of exact science.

Further still, that bygone type of Christianity was deficient in social vision. In spite of certain noble exceptions people under its sway were apt to be so engrossed with the question of their own individual safety that they remained blind to the elements of cruelty and tyranny which are embodied in our social order, and so did nothing for the deliverance of their brethren who are in bondage. And as soon as a certain sensitiveness about the guilt of society in relation to the under-privileged classes began to spread, the result was inevitably a fairly strong reaction from that conventional Christianity.

Add to these facts the prevalence now for many years in your country of a certain attitude of mind which has resulted in behaviourism, humanism and a mechanistic view of human life, and the present considerable repudiation of religion on many campuses is easily understood.

Probably too the prosperity of the United States in a material sense has influenced the situation. The student who thinks that it is going to be an easy thing to get through life, and who has been accustomed from childhood to possess all the means needed for a round of pleasures is not likely, at that state of his development, to be conscious of those deeper needs of his personality in relation to which money is utterly irrelevant.

May I add a word about the relations of men and women and the tone of the colleges in connection with sex. Again I must refrain from attempting comparisons. Whatever else they are American students are frank and unreserved. Their ways are not furtive ways, and they are not ashamed of their customs. Therefore it is impossible to compare them with other student bodies in which a great deal of concealment is practised. The outwardly respectable nations are not necessarily the most moral.

Yet the frankness of American students does make a visitor aware of the situation so that I know quite well that considerable numbers of men and women students in the colleges of this country have missed their way in the matter of sex. They have repudiated the standards and conventions of the past century and have claimed absolute freedom to follow inclination and to experiment. As a result numbers of them are feeling lost. In the large free world they have claimed as theirs, there seem to be no roads to guide them. They experiment and reap bitterness. They discover nothing great in such sex experience as they indulge in and so are tempted to be cynical about life. Many of them strain and thwart their natures while they are still immature. To a man who is intensely attracted by your American students, boys and girls alike, these facts are very sad. They have greatly burdened my spirit. I believe that much of this sad situation is due to the fact that the education of our young people in the matter of sex is so incomplete. They have, as a rule, been informed of the physical facts of the matter but they have not been helped to understand the human values of these facts. They do not know what those facts mean when translated into active experience. They have practically no understanding of the truth that sexual experiences inevitably affect in a profound way the whole personalities of men and women. They do not know that neither man nor woman can experiment with the body and leave the spirit free.

Therefore the completion of the education of students everywhere in relation to sex seems to me a primary necessity at present. The only other way, to which it would seem the Pope inclines, would be to stop all education in sex matters and segregate men and women

until marriage. I do not see Americans adopting that plan. It was not a great success in the past when it was largely followed.

But the only alternative is to tell our young people the whole truth — not only the truth about physical functions, but the truth about the intimate connections between spiritual serenity, moral health, and mental alertness with a truly directed sex life. The real pity of the present situation is that these experimenters are missing the really enriching and beautiful experiences to which their sex capacity might lead."

BOOK REVIEWS

PACIFISM IN THE MODERN WORLD, by DEVERE ALLEN. *Publishers: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Garden City, New York. 1929.*

Pacifism is no new thing. Goodwill in human relationships has been the concern of most of the great religious teachers of all time, whether we think of Lao Tse with his philosophy of non-action, of Mo Ti who emphasised the need of equal love to all, of the Buddha whose principles were the antithesis of warfare, or of Jesus Christ himself. But it is only in comparatively recent times that peace has begun to be organised. The first Peace Society was created in the United States in 1815, and similar societies soon followed in England and Geneva. Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century these pioneer groups and individuals laid stress upon the wrongfulness of war, chiefly from the religious point of view but also from the scientific. In the latter connection one may mention the challenge of a Kropotkin in the field of sociology and of Norman Angell in that of economics.

The Great War revolutionised the Peace Movement in common with many other things. During and immediately after the War it was not very difficult to persuade people that war was bad. The great question was : how is it to be abolished ? In the last decade this has been the major preoccupation of statesmen, and is discussed perpetually on the front pages of newspapers. The Peace Movement itself has taken many new forms. On the right wing are the movements of moderate opinion, typified by the League of Nations Unions. On the left wing, War Resistance has received a new impetus from the Conscientious objectors of the war period, and War Resisters are now linked up across the world, though still comparatively few in number.

The Pacifist today, like the statesman, is largely preoccupied with the problem of eradicating war, but whereas the statesman has perforce to give his mind to immediate obstacles to peace, the Pacifist tends to turn his attention to deeper problems of philosophy and psychology that underlie the problem of war eradication. It is true he is often — and quite rightly — dealing with questions of unequal treaties, of economic exploitation, of armaments, of the particularistic clash between nations and races ; but his war experience was of such a kind as to force him to try and answer such fundamental questions as : “ Is human nature pacific ; or at any rate capable of becoming so ? Or again ; can evil be dealt with satisfactorily by non-violent means ? ”

In attempting to answer such questions as these, the symposium, recently edited by Mr. Devere Allen¹ renders a real service. Amongst a score of contributors we find Tagore, the Indian poet, Fenner Brockway, the English Labour politician, as well as a number of American theologians, professors, publicists, etc., including such men as Rufus Jones, John Haynes Holmes, Kirby Page and Reinhold Niebuhr. Though approaching the question from many different points of view, the contributors are nevertheless united by a conviction both of the righteousness and practicability of pacifism, though they are by no means blind to the immense difficulties of its adequate application.

One or two of the essays touch upon the more superficial aspects of the question of peace and war, such as sanctions and security. But, for the most part, the mind is turned to the problem of human nature itself, and to the effectiveness or otherwise of the pacifist method.

With regard to the former question, the Editor points out that it will not be necessary, as pre-war pacifists often suggested that it would be, to bring about a radical transformation of human nature before war can be abolished. There is no reason, he suggests, why *international* war at any rate should not be ruled out from human affairs just as many other outgrown institutions such as human sacrifice, marriage by capture, slavery and the duel have been to all intents and purposes. One of the contributors, C. A. Ellwood, a sociologist, insists that “ the one great need of our human world as the sociologist sees it is intelligent active goodwill between all its parts, whether individuals or groups ” ; and again, “ that without a larger fund of human goodwill human society cannot progress and security is impossible ”. In another place it is pointed out that even Napoleon himself was at last compelled to admit that :

¹ *Pacifism in the Modern World.*

" War is an anachronism. Some day victories will be won without cannons and bayonets... Do you know what I marvel at most in the world? The impotence of force in organisation. There are only two powers in the world, the mind and the sword. In the long run the sword is always defeated by the mind."

Reinhold Niebuhr, in regarding human nature, points out that :

" The cynic who discounts the moral potentialities of human nature seems always to verify his critical appraisal of human nature for the reason that his very scepticism lowers the moral potentialities of the individuals and groups with which he deals. On the other hand, the faith which assumes generosity in the fellow man is also verified because it tends to create what it assumes. "

Turning to the question of pacifism in action and its adequacy in face of evil, Professor Rufus Jones has some striking things to say about the constructive power of pacifism in the face of the evil person, whilst examples are given by various of the contributors as to the power of the non-violent method in actual practice, whether by William Penn and the early Quakers in Pennsylvania, or by the German working class population at the time of the Ruhr occupation, or the Kapp *Putsch*, or again by Mr. Gandhi whether in South Africa or India. Devere Allen himself, in his essay on *War Resistance as War Prevention*, makes a powerful plea by way of conclusion for the method of War Resistance as an essential factor in overthrowing the Moloch of war.

It may be that many non-pacifists in reading the book will feel that the difficulties of the pacifist position have been underrated. There are, nevertheless, many evidences that the contributors recognise that for the pacifist to be loyal to his method, he must be ready for unusual sacrifices. This, as A. J. Muste points out in his essay on *Pacifism and Class War*, is particularly true of the pacifist who seeks to apply his method to the social problem.

The Editor has done well to place at the end of the book E. Merrill Root's essay entitled *Life's Bread and Wine* in which the author pleads for what he calls " the aesthetic equivalent of war ", insisting that " man does not live by bread alone, but — as the symbol of the sacrament tells us — by bread and wine. Men sometimes turn to war because they have only half rations of the bread ; but they often accept war with a desperate joy because they have had *no* rations of the wine ". This is virtually the same doctrine that William James put forward some twenty years ago in his famous essay on

the *Moral Equivalent of War*, which has always seemed to us one of the profoundest analyses of the problem. The necessity for finding war's equivalent is especially true when dealing with the younger generation. Unless everyday life can be so organised that the spirit of service and sacrifice is normally called upon, then it will be very difficult to overcome the idealistic appeal made by war to adventurous youth.

I think something might have been added also about the immense spiritual difficulty of applying non-violence, or "soul force" as Gandhi would prefer to style it. There is no virtue in offering the other cheek unless the spirit which motivates the act is essentially pacific, and positively so. A negative attitude is useless. Still worse would be a mechanical act with ill-will merely restrained. This provides perhaps the central difficulty for those who would be pacifists in any full sense, because it involves a degree of spiritual attainment very hard for common mortals to acquire.

Nevertheless, one feels that Devere Allen and his collaborators have done much to show that modern pacifism is very far from being a weak and futile factor in human life. The cooperative and pacific spirit is shown by one contributor after another to be integral in human nature, and capable moreover of immense extensions, both through the very necessities of modern life, and as the result of the passionate belief of a pioneering minority.

Bertram PICKARD

The Theology of Anglo-Catholicism.

ESSAYS CATHOLIC AND CRITICAL, by MEMBERS OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION, third edition. *Publishers: S. P. C. K., London 1929. Price: 10/6d.*

It is one of the most distinctive features of British theological life that theological discussion is continually being stimulated by the appearance of volumes of essays written by theologians who are of the same basic convictions. The advantage of this method is that the reader gets a survey of the various implications of a certain attitude as it is explained from different angles. Moreover each part of the system presented is dealt with by a thinker who speaks with authority in that particular realm.

The *Essays Catholic and Critical* are particularly successful in both respects. They cover a wide range of present day theology and every essay is a piece of lucid presentation although intricate subject

matter. No one who wishes to know the Anglo-Catholic Movement can afford to leave this book unread. It is likely that it will remain the most important and most authoritative utterance of its kind for a long time to come.

As an outsider and as one interested in Christian unity one reads this volume with two questions in mind namely : What is the distinctive character of Anglo-Catholic thought today ? And : What is the Anglo-Catholic attitude to non-Catholic groups ? We would select these two aspects among the many possible ones for a few comments, which are offered as a contribution to the interconfessional discussion and not as criticism.

The title gives us an answer as to the first question. The view point of the writers is that the Catholic and the critical movements need to be blended. They do not mean to say that they accept all the results of the so-called critical movement in theology but they are willing to accept its principle. This is clearly stated by the editor where he distinguishes between the modernist way of " postulating uniformities for Christianity as a whole which apply only to a particular part of it " and the critical way of " standing for the facts which give theology its autonomy as a science." In other words the *Essays* are an attempt to show that the facts of the " normal human experience " and the facts of " religious experience " do not contradict each other and provide together a basis for a catholic theology.

This is a most interesting attitude to take. For if the attempt is successful the greatest need of our time, namely, the reconciliation of the great catholic tradition of Christianity with modern thought will be met. All Christians ought therefore to be interested in this undertaking. For in some way we all want to be " catholic " and we all want to find the Christian message for our modern world.

Has it happened ?

It is certainly true that the volume contains many valuable suggestions for the bridging of the deplorable gulf. But does it give us the bridge itself ?

The underlying assumption is that authority in religion rests with the religious experience of Christians, considered as a whole. The maxim "*quid semper, ab omnibus, ubicunque creditur* " is here pushed to its logical extreme. It is asserted that the proof of authority " will lie in the extent to which it commends itself by its power to survive as a living element in the consciousness of the whole Christian body."

Can this be the basis for " catholic " doctrine ? Is this not rather religious pragmatism ? Is this not avoiding the question of truth ?

Is it not our duty as Christians sometimes to stand in the name of Christian truth against "the elements that survive?" The question is not only important in relation to the problem of authority. It affects the whole of Christian doctrine. One might for instance take the question of Sin and the Fall. Here again the religious experience is considered authoritative. Consequently, the doctrines are considerably weakened. Original Sin becomes "the result of mis directed social influence." The reality of a "Fall of some kind" is maintained, but only as a deduction from experience. It would seem that the danger for this theology is that it continues to use the accepted terminology of Christian doctrine while meaning things which are quite different from the "Catholic" tradition.

Is it not against the genius of Christianity to base our convictions solely on experience? The Christian Church has always appealed to an authority beyond experience, sometimes even against experience, that is to say, something objective which it called the Word of God — in Christ, in the Bible, in the Church. This Word of God is not the same as the total religious experience of Christians. Very often prophets in the Church have had to speak on behalf of this Word against the combined convictions of the Christians. To make experience, even of the highest possible degree, the point of reference, means to have Christianity transformed into "a gospel according to man" — which it is not.

This brings us to the second point. It is the question of the attitude of Anglo-Catholicism to other so-called non-Catholic groups and especially to Protestantism.

The *Essays* have a good deal to say about "Liberal Protestantism". They are however very silent about Protestantism *tout court*. This is a great pity for it would seem that the Anglo-Catholics would have a broader basis of discussion with those Protestants who believe strongly in the truths of the Reformation than with those who have chosen a different type of theology. For the Reformation is by no means a break with historic Christianity. Liberal Protestantism however is to a very large extent.

The real discussion between Anglo-Catholicism and Protestantism will only begin when Protestantism has re-discovered itself. This process is now going on, especially on the continent of Europe. Just like Anglo-Catholicism it is interested in reviving the essentials of historic Christianity and in giving them an expression which will meet the needs of the modern world.

One of the authors in the *Essays* says: "Protestantism is greatly valuable not only to the world of man, but to Catholicism itself; yet all the time, in the last resort, it depends upon the church

of which it is a criticism." This is a profound remark, which throws light on the relations that ought to exist between Anglo-Catholicism and Protestantism. They ought to enter into a true conversation. It would then be seen that Protestantism is more than a mere "criticism", namely, a true protest not in the name of men but in the name of God against the dangers that every "catholic" church runs. Catholicism on the other hand would be discovered by Protestants as a great challenge to remain true to the origins of Christian faith. If such an interaction were to take place a new type of catholicity would be the result. It would perhaps lay less stress on the *quid semper, ab omnibus, ubicumque creditur* as on that which has been believed by the great prophets of all times, who did not speak in the name of experience, but in the name of God.

V. 't H

WAYS OF SHARING WITH OTHER FAITHS, by DANIEL J. FLEMING.

Publishers: Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City, 1929, pp. 267.

Dr. D. J. Fleming's "Attitudes towards other Faiths" has already attained almost the rank of a "classic" in its own sphere; and now this companion volume again focusses our attention on the supremely important and urgent question of the relation of Christianity to other religions. It is a question that demands consideration; because in many parts of the world, practical steps are being taken today by Christian workers and missionaries in the way of co-operation with other faiths, which are not merely novel, but which (implicitly at least) contain a challenge to many axioms which have hitherto been universally accepted in the Christian Church. That challenge cannot long be ignored; and if it is to be met wisely, it is essential that Christian folk should give some clear and careful thinking to the issues involved.

As a contribution to such thinking, Dr. Fleming's book is timely and valuable. It is typically American in its love of tabulation and classification, but in dealing with a complex subject, this certainly conduces to making the issues plain and the contrasts vivid.

It consists of four parts: *Part I* enumerates six "ways of sharing" of increasing degrees of aggressiveness, as follows:

1) *The promotion of good-will*, and renunciation of malice and misrepresentation;

2) *Reciprocal sharing*, i.e., co-operation in the search for a Truth wider than that which is at present grasped by any one religion;

3) *Aggressive interpenetration*, e.g., the effort to create a "Christian Spirit" within other religious systems ;

4) *Making Christ central*, but not stressing the necessity of the Christian Church ;

5) *Re-grouping converts* to Christianity in an organised Church, and making "the Church" central ;

6) *The eradication* of all non-Christian religions, and the substitution of Christianity as the one and only true Religion.

Part II similarly codifies six different types of "inducements to conversion" ; this time, in decreasing order of aggressiveness : 1) Coercion. 2) direct bribery or other attractions ; 3) advantages offered on condition of listening to Christian preaching ; 4) similar advantages associated with voluntary opportunities for hearing the message ; 5) the attraction of disinterested service and example, without direct evangelistic appeal and 6) noble living, without ulterior objective.

Part III sets forth two types of "educational emphasis", one laying stress on the form of the message, the other on the "adventure" of developing self-reliant personality, with the attendant risks of free choice.

Finally, in *Part IV*, Dr. Fleming gives us a "Code of Ethics for those who share".

The above outline is perhaps sufficient to indicate how full of interest is Dr. Fleming's survey, illustrated as it is at every point by concrete instances drawn from many fields of the modern world. His own view-point is not obtruded, though it is indicated on p. 6 : "in the life of Jesus Christ we have a revelation of Reality of inestimable significance to every human creature", and therefore, "to be shared with brethren everywhere". The underlying assumptions are (as the writer recognises), essentially Protestant (p. 258) ; and, a great part of the book will seem to advocate impossible compromises in the eyes of those who adhere to the "Catholic" or "Confessional" Churches. In the Church of Rome, for instance, there can be no question of accepting any policy less than that of the eradication or absorption of non-Christian systems. Similarly, all types of Christianity, which claim to be trustees of a special, divinely-given system of Faith or Order or Doctrine, will find it difficult to take many steps along the road of "sharing with other Faiths". In fact, so long as ever the Person of Christ Himself is regarded as something Absolute and Final, it is hard to see how any "missionary-policy" can rest content with any goal short of a "World-Dominion of Christ", in which all other faiths will be either eradicated or absorbed. And it is difficult to practise real "sharing" on the road to that goal.

But if the claim to *Absoluteness* and *Finality* is discarded, then (however emphatic may be the emphasis upon the *superiority* of Christianity over all other known faiths, and its "inestimable value" for all mankind), the way is open for a *real sharing* with other faiths, and for a co-operative search for truth, in which each type of thought may feel that it is welcomed into a true fellowship, and that its contribution, however feeble, will be received with respect and consideration, as part of the heritage of the Family of God.

E. C. DEWICK

Religion and Reality

RELIGIÖSE VERWIRKLICHUNG, VON PAUL TILlich. *Furche-Verlag, Berlin, N. W.* 7. 336 Seiten. Geh. RM. 10 — in *Gzlw. geb.* RM. 12.

An earlier work of Professor Tillich's on "The religious situation of our time" begins with these words: "A book on the religious situation of our time must speak of *everything* in our present-day life". What we are religiously does not only, perhaps not even most of all, depend on our specifically "religious" life, it depends on all that we are and do.

It is the great advantage of Professor Tillich's works that he has made this truth central in his thought. For him theology is not a curious interest of professional "divines" but the basic realm of thought where each domain of life is studied from the view point of its relation to eternity, to God. It follows that for him the most important problem of our and of all times is how to *realise* religious truth in life, how to make it effective in our actual existence. Too many Christians are quite content to think in a vacuum or to produce sterile thought. In our time there is need of Christian thought which creates new life, new forms, new standards.

In order to *realise* we must know the world for which we are to think. It is characterized by its impotence to transcend the struggle between the defenders of the traditional forms of life and the advocates of pure autonomy who reject all definite forms. The background of this situation is the break away of modern bourgeois society from the transcendent aims of life. The fight against heteronomy has led to a pure autonomy which leaves no place for the eternal, infinite reality.

"Religious realisation" depends on a re-discovery of the transcendent meaning of human existence. There is no meaningful

life where the question of relationship to eternity is not answered. But how shall it be answered? The "orthodox" answer with its heteronomy and its supernaturalism belongs definitely to the past. The relativistic "liberal" theology avoids the issue. There is then a place for new and vital answers growing out of our particular situation.

The studies which Professor Tillich offers in this volume are all attempts to answer this question in one particular realm of life. Theological as well as philosophical and social problems are used as illustrations. In each case the problem is : how may we here discover the transcendent meaning? How can we make this realm of thought or life again transparent so that through it we may become aware of eternity?

The guiding conviction is that transcendence is always an attack on immanence; Eternity threatens time. And only if this attack is taken seriously, is there dynamic life. It is therefore essential for our message, as well as for our activity, that we should never absolutise the new immanent "symbols" or "forms" in which we present truth. This is the essence of Protestantism, that it remains a protest, not only against the "absolutes" in the human expression of other religions, but even against its own "absolute". It remains opened toward eternity. It does not know a "ready" or even "true" doctrine. Its church-formation, its social expression are eternally criticised from the standpoint of transcendent truth. We should not therefore present an idea of God as the "Christian" one. We should present the fact of God's existence and the fact of His entrance into the world in the life of Christ without trying to commit ourselves to the "what" of God and the "what" of Christ. Wherever we go further, we endanger the very thing at which we are aiming, namely, that the transcendence should judge and by judging, renew and vitalise all forms of life including those of theology. These thoughts are worked out in pages which excel in clear and stimulating formulations of the underlying problems of our present-day civilization. While the studies deal with very varied topics, there is a very clear unity in the book as a whole, as all these topics are approached from this same angle. We recommend them for careful reading to all those who are concerned with the tremendous issue of the impact of faith on the reality of the modern world.

There are, however, some questions to be raised. Is it an adequate answer to the question of religion and reality, of transcendence and immanence, to present a transcendence without contents? Can we present God, can we present Christ, without committing ourselves

to an idea of God and to an interpretation of Christ ? Is it not a denial of the revelation to speak only of the " that " and not of the " what " of God's word to us ? With Professor Tillich we would guard the Christian message from a substituting of human immanent and " intellectual " contents for the transcendent truth of God. But can we avoid the danger altogether ? Is this danger not part of our human situation ? And has God Himself not given us a word full of contents which we must somehow interpret for the modern world ?

We hope that Professor Tillich will throw further light on these questions. But even if we are not yet sure that he gives us sufficiently clear guidance as to the message of Christianity to the modern world, we are deeply thankful for his penetrating analysis of the present situation and his call to pioneering in the realm where religion and reality meet.

V. 't H

SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND ; A STUDY IN ITS ORIGIN AND NATURE BY J. F. LAUN ; WITH A FOREWORD BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK. *Publishers: Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland Press, 32 Russell Square, London. W.C.1. Price: 4s. 6d.*

The author of this volume sets himself to answer the question : " Why has social Christianity its deepest root in England ? " By " Social Christianity ", he understands the application of Christian principles to all the great ethical problems—social, political, economic (so far as they are ethical) and international : in short, the programme of the " Copec " Conference at Birmingham in 1924.

In answering this question he gives an illuminating historical analysis of the composite factors in English Christianity, and a brief sketch of English characteristics, especially as compared with those of Dr. Laun's own nation. Needless to say this study is of profound interest. This book should not be neglected by anyone who is interested in the structure and history of English Christianity.

One can trace the author's experiences during his sojourn in England, his contact with the Woodbrooke group of Quakers, the awakening of his pacifist sympathies, and his period of study of English Christianity, " Anglican " and " Free " from the vantage point of Balliol College, Oxford. These experiences and contacts have counted for much in the accuracy and fulness of this survey, though, inevitably, they determine some of its limitations.

The Archbishop of York remarks in his foreword that while the

influence of Luther and Calvin on English Christianity is real, and is fully dealt with, yet no hint is given of another element in its growth — the study of Plato, and the influence of the Platonic tradition, among English, and, indeed, Scottish students of theology. Apart from the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century the Platonic or idealistic trend of philosophical teaching in British universities since T. H. Green, Edward and John Caird, and their successors, has formed the background of much constructive thought in British theology. This tendency runs back through F. D. Maurice and the Christian Socialists, to thinkers of the type of Erskine of Linlathen, and Coleridge, as well as Carlyle, appearing likewise in the later "Lux Mundi" group of which Dr. Laun frequently speaks. All this shows the indebtedness of British Christianity to German thinkers since Kant, who share the Platonic tradition.

The tracing of the subtle interconnection between the philosophic and religious thought of Germany and England, would prove an admirable task for Dr. Laun's zeal and knowledge, and might even lead him to the Archbishop's conclusion, that "at the root 'Copec' is more Platonist than anything else" !

Dr. Laun's method may be said to embarrass him in the effort to analyse all the factors in the situation. "As there is no real understanding of realities" he writes (page 21) "unless we have perfectly clear abstract principles and categories, we must try to state the essential features of those chief types of Christian in a deductive and not a descriptive method." Now, it may be affirmed that a "deductive" method as regards historical facts is dangerous. It has only a limited value as regards psychology and history, because new factors are constantly emerging. Thus Anglicanism is frequently, as here, held to be a "compromise" between Catholicism and Protestantism. But, even from the point of view of an "outsider", it is much more than a "compromise", a *via media*. It has a positive principle — "comprehensiveness". Is it not an effort after a new kind of Catholicism, — the Catholicism of the future, a "comprehensive" Catholicism after which the modern Christian world is groping, as we can see at Stockholm, and still more at Lausanne? True, its comprehensiveness has had its serious limits; its attitude towards non-conformity has been too much that of utter hostility; its failure to retain John Wesley was a grave blunder; its worth is again to be put to the test in the matter of the South Indian Union scheme. Will it now take a step forward in the way of a Catholic comprehensiveness, as it were, of the centre, leaving aside the rigid Catholicism of the past, towards which Anglo-Catholics would draw it.

This "comprehensive" character of English Christianity is seen in the composition of "Copec". Every section of the Church contributed something to it. The Evangelicals (Anglican and non-Anglican) had their tradition of philanthropy in their prison reformers and slave abolitionists. The "Broad" Church gave birth to "Christian Socialism", in the work of Maurice and Kingsley. The Anglo-Catholics likewise led by Scott Holland and Bishop Gore were impelled to the same task from their characteristic standpoint. Dr. Laun mentions the "slum-priests" of the Anglo-Catholics; he omits to do homage to the "slum-sisters" of the Salvation Army. It is a grave omission that no mention is made of this world-wide organisation, which yet has its roots in English religious life.

Some further light would have been thrown on the main question by a consideration of such points as these: (1) That the "Industrial Revolution" appeared earlier in England than elsewhere. (2) That John Wesley and his followers gave the Christian Gospel to the miners and other industrial workers in Great Britain in the latter half of the eighteenth century. (Is there anything corresponding to this great popular religious Awakening at the same period in Europe?). And (3) That a renewed study of the New Testament (to which Germany gave much) brought to light the social significance of the "Kingdom of God" in the teaching of Jesus, as never before (Seeley's enormously influential *Ecce Homo* was published in 1865).

This book will reward study, both for its positive contribution towards the solution of the question, and for the further questions and vistas of enquiry which it opens up.

T. M. WATT

INDIENS GNADENRELIGION UND DAS CHRISTENTUM - VERGLEICH UND
UNTERSCHIEDUNG, by RUDOLF OTTO. *Publishers: Leopold Klotz,
Gotha, Germany. Price: RMk. 3.60.*

An English translation of this has appeared; for reference write to the Student Christian Movement Press, 32 Russell Square, London W.C.1.

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